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John Trumbull

Blackmores Creation.

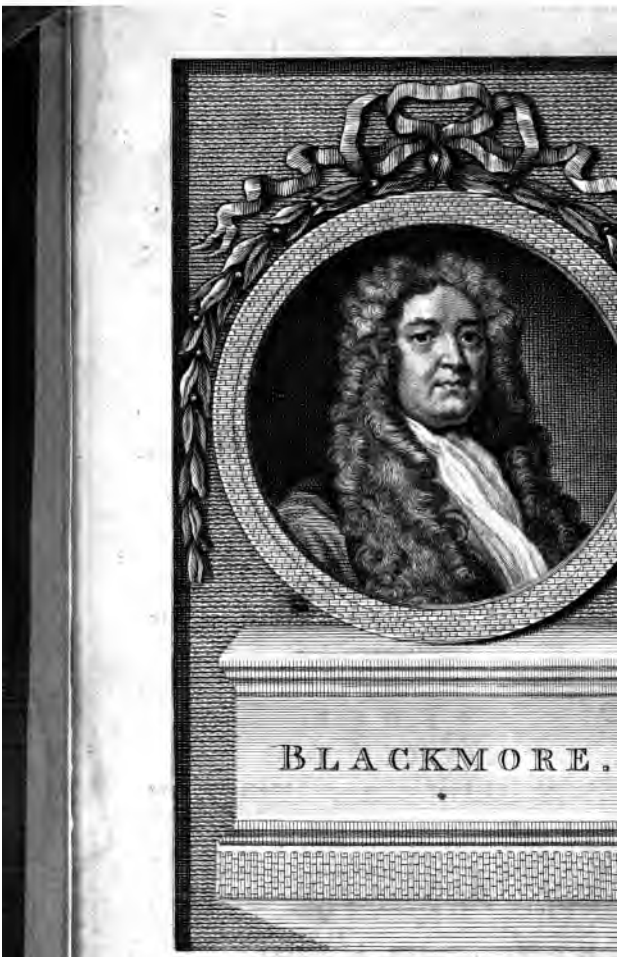
Newark in carcere.

1790 read.

Jan. 6. Johnsons life of Blackmore

Preface —

Jan. 7	Book. 1	747. Lines.
— 15	2	842.
— 21	3	775.
— 28	4	787
Feb. 4	5	782
" 11	6	700
" 18	7	773
		5406


BLACKMORE.

THE

WORKS

OF THE

ENGLISH POETS.

WITH

PREFACES,

BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL,

BY SAMUEL JOHNSON.

VOLUME THE TWENTY-FOURTH.

LONDON:

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M DCC LXXIX.

BLACKMORE'S

CREATION.

CREATION;

A PHILOSOPHICAL

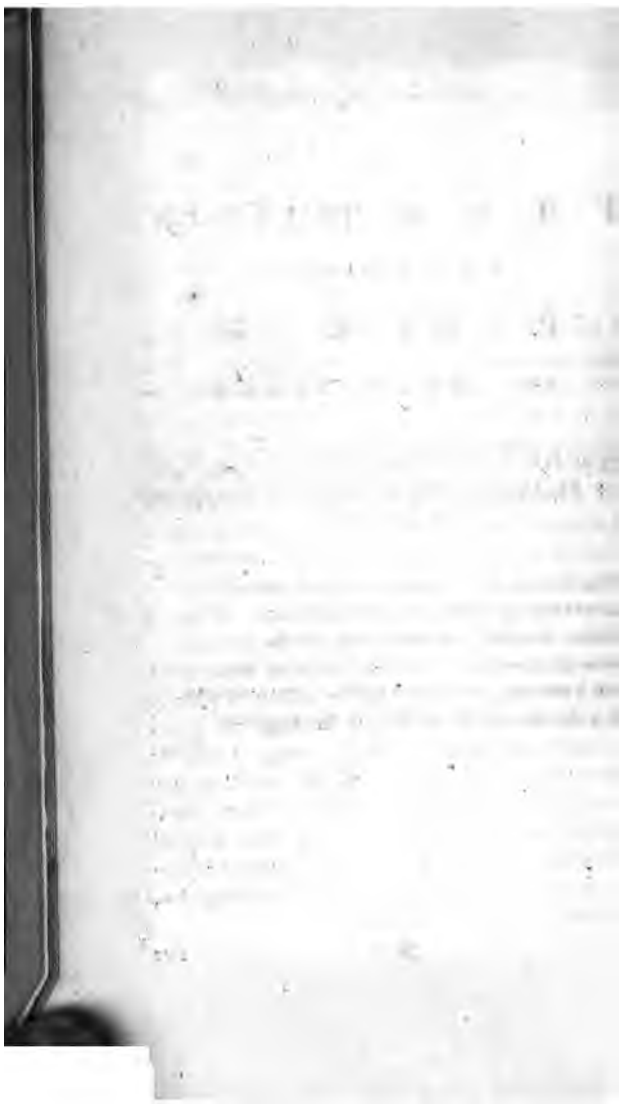
POEM.

IN SEVEN BOOKS.

By Sir RICHARD BLACKMORE, Knt. M. D.
AND FELLOW OF THE COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS
IN LONDON.

" Principio cœlum, ac terras campóſque liquentes,
" Lucentémque globum lunæ, Titaniáque aſtra
" Spiritus intus alit, totámque infuſa per artus
" Mens agitat molem, & magno ſe corpore miſcet.
" Inde hominum, pecudúmque genus, vitæque volantum.
" Et quæ marmoreo fert monſtra ſub æquore pontus."

VIRG.



PREFACE.

IT has been the opinion of many perſons of great ſenſe and learning, that the knowledge of a God, as well as ſome other ſelf-evident and unconteſted notions, is born with us, and exiſts antecedent to any perception or operation of the mind. They expreſs themſelves on this ſubject in metaphorical terms, altogether unbecoming philoſophical and judicious enquiries, while they aſſert, that the knowledge of a God is interwoven with our conſtitution, that it is written, engraven, ſtampt, and imprinted in clear and diſcernible characters on the heart; in which manner of ſpeech they affect to follow the great orator of the Romans.

By theſe unartful phraſes they can mean nothing but this, that the propoſition, THERE IS A GOD, is actually exiſtent in the mind, as ſoon as the mind has its being; and is not at firſt acquired, though it may be afterwards confirmed, by any act of reaſon, by any argument or demonſtration. I muſt confeſs my inability to conceive this inbred knowledge, theſe original independent ideas, that owe not their being to the operation of the underſtanding, but are, I know not how, congenite and co-exiſtent with it.

For how a man can be ſaid to have knowledge before he knows, how ideas can exiſt in the mind without and before perception, I muſt own is too difficult for me to comprehend. That a man is born with a faculty or capacity to know, though as yet without any actual knowledge; and that, as the eye has a native diſpoſition and aptitude to perceive the light, when ſitly offered, though as yet it never exerciſed any act of viſion, and had no innate images in the womb; ſo the mind is endued with a power and faculty to know and perceive the truth of this propoſition, THERE IS A GOD, as ſoon as it ſhall be repreſented to it; all this is clear and intelligible; but any thing more is, as I have ſaid, above my reach. In this opinion, which I had many years ago entertained, I was afterwards confirmed by the famous author of the Eſſay of Human Underſtanding. Nor can I ſee, that by this doctrine the argument for the exiſtence of a Deity, drawn from the general aſſent of all nations (excepting perhaps ſome few, who are ſo barbarous that they approach very near the condition of brute animals), is at all invalidated. For ſuppoſing there is no inbred knowledge of a God; yet if mankind generally aſſent to it, whether their belief proceeds from their reflection on themſelves, or on the viſible creation about them, it will be certainly true, that the exiſtence of a Deity carries with it the cleareſt and moſt uncontrolable evidence; ſince mankind ſo readily and ſo univerſally perceive and embrace it. It deſerves conſideration, that St. Paul upon this argument does not appeal to the

the light within, or to any characters of the Divine Being originally engraven on the heart, but deduces the cauſe from the effect, and from the creation infers the Creator.

It is very probable that thoſe who believe an innate idea of a Divine Being, unproduced by any operation of the mind, were led by this to another opinion, namely, that there never was in the world a real Atheiſt in belief and ſpeculation, how many ſoever there may have been in life and practice. But, upon due examination, this opinion, I imagine, will not abide the teſt; which I ſhall endeavour to make evident.

But, before I enter upon this ſubject, it ſeems proper to take notice of the apology, which ſeveral perſons of great learning and candour have made for many famous men, and great philoſophers, unjuſtly accuſed of impiety.

Whoever ſhall ſet about to mend the world, and reform men's notions, as well as their manners, will certainly be the mark of much ſcandal and reproach; and will effectually be convinced, that it is too poſſible the greateſt lovers and benefactors of mankind may be repreſented by the multitude, whoſe opinions they contradict, as the worſt of men. The hardy undertakers, who expreſs their zeal to rectify the ſentiments of a prejudiced people in matters of religion, who labour to ſtem the tide of popular error, and ſtrike at the foundations of any ancient, eſtabliſhed ſuperſtition, muſt themſelves expect to be treated as pragmatical and inſolent innovators, diſturbers of the public peace,

and the great enemies of religion. The obſervation of all ages confirms this truth; and, if any man who is doubtful of it would try the experiment, I make no queſtion he will very ſoon be thoroughly convinced.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Anaxagoras, though he was the firſt philoſopher who plainly aſſerted an Eternal Mind by whoſe power the world was made, for oppoſing the public worſhip at Athens, whoſe refined wits were plunged in the moſt ſenſeleſs idolatry, and particularly for denying the divinity of the Sun, ſhould be condemned for irreligion, and treaſon againſt the Gods; and be heavily fined and baniſhed the city. It is no wonder, after ſo ſharp a perſecution of this zealous reformer, that Socrates, the next ſucceſſor but one to Anaxagoras, and the laſt of the Ionic ſchool, for oppoſing their ſcandalous rabble of deities, and aſſerting one Divine Being, ſhould be condemned for Atheiſm, and put to death, by blind ſuperſtition and implacable bigotry.

Some have been condemned by their antagoniſts for impiety, who maintain poſitions, which thoſe from whom they diſſent imagine have a tendency to the diſbelief of a Deity. But this is a manifeſt violation of juſtice, as well as candour, to impute to any man the remote conſequences of his opinion, which he himſelf diſclaims and deteſts, and who, if he ſaw the connexion of his principles with ſuch concluſions, would readily renounce them. No man can be reaſonably charged with more opinions than he owns; and if this juſtice were obſerved in polemical diſcourſes,

as

as well of theology as philoſophy, many perſons had eſcaped theſe hard names, and terrible cenſures, which their angry antagoniſts have thought fit to fix upon them. No one therefore is to be reputed an Atheiſt, or an enemy to religion, upon the account of any erroneous opinion, from which another may by a long chain of ſequels draw that concluſion; much leſs for holding any doctrines in philoſophy, which the common people are not able to examine or comprehend, who, when they meddle with ſpeculations, of which they are unqualified to judge, will be as apt to cenſure a philoſopher for an Atheiſt, as an aſtronomer for a magician.

I would fain too in this place make ſome apology for the great numbers of looſe and vicious men, who laugh at religion, and ſeem in their converſation to diſclaim the belief of a Deity. I do not mean an apology for their practice, but their opinion. I hope theſe unhappy perſons, at leaſt the greateſt part, who have given up the reins to their paſſions and exorbitant appetites, are, rather than Atheiſts, a careleſs and ſtupid ſort of creatures, who, either out of a ſupine temper, or for fear of being diſturbed with remorſe in their unwarrantable enjoyments, never ſoberly conſider with themſelves, or exerciſe their reaſon on things of the higheſt importance. Theſe perſons never examine the arguments that enforce the belief of a Deity, and the obligations of religion: but take the word of their ingenious friends, or ſome atheiſtical pretender to philoſophy, who aſſures them there is no God, and there-

fore no religion. And notwithſtanding all Atheiſts have leave given them by their principles to become libertines, yet it is not true that all libertines are Atheiſts. Some plainly aſſert their belief of a God; and others, who deny his exiſtence, yet do not deny it upon any principles, any ſcheme of philoſophy which they have framed, and by which they account for the exiſtence and duration of the world, in the beautiful order in which we ſee it, without the aid of a Divine Eternal Mind.

But there are two ſorts of men, who without injuſtice have been called Atheiſts; thoſe who frankly and in plain terms have denied the being of a God; and thoſe who, though they aſſerted his being, denied thoſe attributes and perfections, which the idea of a God includes; and ſo, while they acknowledged the name, ſubverted the thing. Theſe are as real Atheiſts as the former, but leſs ſincere. If any man ſhould declare he believes a Deity, but affirms that this Deity is of human ſhape, and not eternal; that he derives his being from the fortuitous concourſe and complication of atoms; or, though he allowed him to be eternal, ſhould maintain, that he ſhewed no wiſdom, deſign, or prudence, in the formation, and no care or providence in the government, of the world; that he never reflects on any thing exterior to his own being, nor intereſts himſelf in human affairs; does not know, or does not attend to, any of our actions: ſuch a perſon is, indeed, and in effect, as much an Atheiſt as the former. For though he owns the appellation, yet his deſcription is

deſtructive

deſtructive of the idea of a God. I do not affirm, that the idea of a God implies the relation of a Creator: but, ſince in the demonſtration of the exiſtence of a God we argue from the effect to the cauſe, and proceed from the contemplation of the creature to the knowledge of the Creator, it is evident we cannot know there is a God, but we muſt know him to be the Maker, and, if the Maker, then the Governor and Benefactor of the world. Could there be a God, who is entirely regardleſs of things without him, who is perfectly unconcerned with the direction and government of the world, is altogether indifferent whether we worſhip or affront him, and is neither pleaſed nor diſpleaſed with any of our actions; he would certainly to us be the ſame as no God. The log in the fable would be altogether as venerable a Deity; for if he has no concern with us, it is plain we have none with him: if we are not ſubject to any laws he has made for us, we can never be obedient or diſobedient, nor can we need forgiveneſs, or expect reward. If we are not the ſubjects of his care and protection, we can owe him no love or gratitude; if he either does not hear or diſregards our prayers, how impertinent is it to build temples, and to worſhip at his altars! In my opinion, ſuch notions of a Deity, which lay the axe to the root of all religion, and make all the expreſſions of it idle and ridiculous; which deſtroy the diſtinction of good and bad, all morality of our actions, and remove all the grounds and reaſons of fear of puniſhment, and hope of reward; will juſtly denominate a man an Atheiſt,

Atheiſt, though he ever ſo much diſclaims that ignominious title.

Thales the founder of the Ionic ſchool, and the philoſophers who ſucceeded him, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Diogenes Apollionates, Anaxagoras, and Archelaus, are cenſured by Ariſtotle as diſbelievers of a Deity; the reaſon he gives is, that theſe philoſophers, in treating of the principles of the world, never introduce the Deity as the efficient cauſe. But if it be conſidered, that natural ſcience was then in its infancy, and that thoſe primitive philoſophers only undertook to account for the material principle out of which the world was made, which one aſſerted to be water, one fire, another air; though this may prove that they formed but a lame and unfiniſhed ſcheme of philoſophy, yet it does not evince, that they denied the being of a God, or that they did not believe him to be the efficient cauſe of all things. It is indeed a convincing evidence that their philoſophy was imperfect, as at firſt it might well be; but from their ſilence or omiſſion of him in their ſyſtems, when they deſigned to treat only of the material cauſes of things, it is unreaſonable to affirm that they denied his being: and it is certain Anaxagoras taught, that, beſides matter, it was abſolutely neceſſary to aſſert a Divine Mind, the Contriver and Maker of the world; and for this religious principle, as was ſaid before, he was at Athens an illuſtrious confeſſor.

After the death of Socrates, the Ionic ſchool was ſoon divided into various ſects and philoſophical parties: of the Cyrenaic ſchool, Theodorus and Dion Boriſthenites,

Boriſthenites, were reputed Atheiſts, contemners of the Gods, and deriders of religion. Yet ſince it does not appear, that they had formed any impious ſcheme of philoſophy, or maintained their irreligion by any pretended principles of reaſon, it is not improbable that theſe men were rather abandoned libertines, without conſideration and reflection, than ſpeculative and philoſophical Atheiſts.

The Italic ſchool, to its great diſhonour, was more fertile in impiety, and produced a greater number of theſe irreligious philoſophers. The maſters, who ſucceeded their famous founder Pythagoras, ſoon degenerated from his noble and pious principles, and not only corrupted the purity of his doctrine, but became downright apoſtates, renouncing the belief of a God, and ſubverting the foundations of religion. Leucippus, Democritus, Diagoras, and Protagoras, were juſtly reckoned in this rank; who aſſerted, that the world was made by the caſual combination of atoms, without any aſſiſtance or direction of a Divine Mind. They taught their followers this doctrine, ſupported it with arguments, and ſo were Atheiſts on pretended principles of reaſon. But among all the ancient obdurate Atheiſts, and inveterate enemies of religion, no one ſeems more ſincere, or more implacable, than Epicurus.

And though this perſon was perhaps of as dull an underſtanding, of as unrefined thought, and as little ſagacity and penetration, as any man who was ever complimented with the name of a philoſopher; yet ſeveral great wits, and men of diſtinguiſhed learning, in this laſt

laſt age, have been pleaſed to give the world high encomiums of his capacity and ſuperior attainments.

After a long night of ignorance had overſpread the face of Europe, many wiſe men, from a generous love of truth, reſolved to exerciſe their reaſon, and free themſelves from prejudice, and a ſervile veneration of great names, and prevailing authority; and, growing impatient of tyrannical impoſitions, as well in philoſophy as religion, to their great honour, ſeparated both from the church of Rome, and the ſchool of Ariſtotle. Theſe patriots of the commonwealth of learning combined to reform the corruptions, and redreſs the grievances, of philoſophy; to pull down the Peripatetic monarchy, and ſet up a free and independent ſtate of ſcience; and, being fully convinced of the weakneſs and unreaſonableneſs of Ariſtotle's ſyſtem, which conſiſted chiefly of words without any determined meaning, and of idle metaphyſical definitions, of which many were falſe, and many unintelligible; they in this caſe had recourſe to the Corpuſcularian hypotheſis, and revived the obſolete and exploded ſyſtem of Epicurus.

Many of theſe noble leaders, who had declared againſt the Peripatetic uſurpation, and aſſerted the rights and liberties of human underſtanding, called in this philoſopher, for want of a better, to depoſe Ariſtotle. And though a general revolution did not follow, yet the defection from the prince of ſcience, as he was once eſteemed, was very great. When theſe firſt reformers of Ariſtotle's ſchool had eſpouſed the intereſt of Epicurus, and introduced his doctrines, that

his hypotheſis might be received with the leſs oppoſition, they thought it neceſſary to remove the ignominious character of impiety, under which their philoſopher had long lain. And it is indeed very natural for a man, who has embraced another's notions and principles, to believe well of his maſter, and to ſtand up in the defence of his reputation. The learned Gaſſendus is eminent above all others for the warm zeal he had expreſſed, and the great pains he has taken, to vindicate the honour of Epicurus, and clear his character from the imputation of irreligion.

After the unhappy fate of Anaxagoras and the great Socrates, it is no wonder that the philoſophers, who ſucceeded, ſhould grow more cautious in propagating their opinions, for fear of provoking the magiſtrate, and making themſelves obnoxious to the laws of their country: and, if any had formed irreligious ſchemes, it is to be ſuppoſed, they would take care to guard, as well as they could, againſt the puniſhment to be inflicted on all who denied the Gods, and derided the eſtabliſhed worſhip. An Atheiſt cannot be ſuppoſed to be fond of ſuffering, when pain and death are what he chiefly abhors: and therefore Epicurus, who, if Cicero and Plutarch knew his opinion, was a downright profeſſed Atheiſt, has not in terms denied, but indeed aſſerted, the being of the Gods; and ſpeaks honourably of them, ſo far as regards the excellence of their nature, and their happineſs. But when he deſcribes his Gods, and gives them a human face and limbs, and ſays they are neither incorporeal nor corporeal,

poreal, but as it were corporeal; while he excludes them from any hand in making, or care in guiding and governing, the world, and undertakes to ſhew that all things were brought about by mere chance, without any help or direction of the Gods, who are altogether unconcerned with human affairs, and regardleſs of our actions; he muſt laugh in himſelf, and be ſuppoſed to have formed this ridiculous idea of a Divine Being merely to eſcape the character of an impious philoſopher. For though he owns the name of a God, by his deſcription he intirely deſtroys the Divine Nature. Nor do I think, that Ariſtotle can be defended from the charge of Atheiſm; for while he affirms, that the world as to its formation, as well as its progreſſion and duration, is independent on the Gods, and owes nothing to their power, wiſdom, or providence, he utterly ſubverts all pretence to religion and divine worſhip, and comes at laſt into the dregs of the Epicurean ſcheme: this, I believe, I have plainly proved in the following poem.

As to the modern Atheiſts, Vaninus, Hobbes, and Spinoſa; I have ſpoken of them in their turn, and ſhall not anticipate what is ſaid hereafter.

I have been determined to employ ſome of my leiſure hours in writing on this ſubject, by the melancholy reflection I have often made on the growth of prophaneneſs, and the prevailing power of looſe and irreligious principles in this nation.

It is a mortifying conſideration to all who love mankind, and wiſh well to their country, that this opinion has of late years, above the example of paſt ages,

ſpread its contagious influence ſo far and wide, that now, emboldened by the power and number of its aſſertors, it becomes inſolent and formidable. Thoſe impious maxims, which a ſmall party in the laſt age, when inflamed with wine, vented in private, are now the entertainment of the coffee-houſe, publicly profeſſed, and in many companies ſpoken of in cool blood, as the ordinary ſubjects of converſation.

All ages have brought forth ſome monſters, ſome profeſſors and patrons of irreligion; monſters in reſpect of their ſcarceneſs, as well as deformity; but the amazing abundance of theſe odious productions is, I believe, peculiar to this fertile age. I am apt to think, that moſt who were reckoned Atheiſts in former reigns were rather unbridled libertines, than irreligious in principle: but now we are ſo far advanced, that the infection has ſeized the mind; the Atheiſt in practice is become one in ſpeculation, and looſeneſs of manners improved to intellectual impiety.

Many (which is without example) expreſs an ardent zeal for prophaneneſs, are grown bigots in Atheiſm, and with great induſtry and application propagate their principles, form parties, and concert meaſures to carry on with vigour the cauſe of irreligion. They careſs, and are very fond of, thoſe who boldly declare for impiety, and mock all religion as cheat and impoſture. Theſe are wits, men of ſenſe, of large and free thoughts, and cannot fail of being men in faſhion. And as the renegades and deſerters of Heaven, who renounce their God for the favour of men, and chuſe

to

to grow popular at the deareſt rate, are by many protected and applauded; ſo there are places where a man, that has the aſſurance to own the belief of a Deity and a future ſtate, would be expoſed and laughed out of countenance. Hence many are tempted to conceal their notions of religion, for fear of blaſting their reputation, and of being neglected and deſpiſed by thoſe from whoſe favour they expect profit or promotion.

Immediately after the Reſtoration, the people, intoxicated with the pleaſures of peace, and influenced by the example of a looſe court, as well as from their great averſion to the former fanatical ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of converſation, which they deteſted as hypocriſy, indulged themſelves in ſenſual liberties, and by degrees ſunk deep into luxury and vice. Then it was that ſome irreligious men, taking advantage of this growing diſſolution of manners, began to propagate their deteſtable notions, and ſow the ſeeds of prophaneneſs and impiety, which ſprung up apace, and flouriſhed in proportion to the growth of immorality. Thus vice and irreligion, mutually aſſiſting each other, extended their power by daily encroachments; and the ſolid temper and firmneſs of mind, which the people once poſſeſſed, being ſlackened and diſſolved by the power of riot and forbidden pleaſure, their judgement ſoon became vitiated; which corruption of taſte has ever ſince gradually increaſed, as the confederate powers of vice and prophaneneſs have ſpread their infection, and gained upon religion.

While

While looſe principles and impious opinions pervert the judgment, a petulant humour that inclines men to give an air of levity and ridicule to all their diſcourſes, and turn every thing to mirth and raillery, does in proportion get ground; this being eſteemed the moſt ſucceſsful method to weaken the power and authority of religion in the minds of men.

I would not here be underſtood as if I condemned the qualifications of wit and pleaſantry, but only the miſapplication of them. I ſhall always retain a great value for ingenious men, provided they do not abuſe and proſtitute their talents to the worſt purpoſes; I mean the deriding all ſobriety of manners, and turning into jeſt the principles which conſtitute our duty here, and aſſure our happineſs hereafter. But can any man who reveres a God, and loves his country, ſtand by unconcerned, while looſe and prophane wits ſhew ſo much zeal and diligence in propagating maxims, which tend ſo directly to the diſhonour of the one, and the ruin of the other?

Should Atheiſm and corruption of manners, thoſe inſeparable companions, which, as cauſes and effects, mutually introduce and ſupport each other, prevail much farther; ſhould impious notions in any age hereafter generally infect the higheſt, as well as the inferior ranks of men; what confuſion of affairs muſt enſue! It would be impoſſible to find men of principle to fill the places of truſt and honour, or patrons to promote them: merit would incapacitate and diſqualify for the favour of great men, and a religious

character would be an invincible obſtruction to advancement; there would be no perſons of rank to encourage men of worth, and bring neglected virtue into faſhion. On the contrary, the contemners of heaven and deriders of piety would be careſſed, applauded, and promoted; the diſpoſers of preferment would confer all on thoſe who embrace their opinions: and what a terrible temptation would this be to our youth, to accommodate their notions to thoſe of the men in power, when they ſhall ſee that their favour is not otherwiſe to be procured!

Is it not highly probable that, in ſuch an age, clubs and cabals would be formed of ſcoffers and buffoons, to laugh religion out of countenance, and make the profeſſors of it the object of public ſcorn and contempt?

Beſides, it is natural to believe that Magiſtrates in a commonwealth, generally compoſed of Atheiſts, would likewiſe proceed to violence, and perſecute thoſe whom they could not perſuade to embrace their notions, as much as any ſect of religion has ever done. For it is not religion, but corrupted human nature, that puſhes men on to compulſive methods of obliging their adverſaries to renounce their own, and aſſert the opinions of men in power. It is from the factious temper of a party, not the ſpirit of piety, it is from pride and an impatience of contradiction, or from luſt of dominion, or a violent deſire of engroſſing the places of honour and profit, that men endeavour, by cruel and coercive methods, to ſilence their opponents, and ſuppreſs

preſs their competitors. And if it will be allowed that human paſſions will always exert themſelves with uniformity, and therefore ſtill produce the like effects; if we may foretel what Atheiſts when in power are like to do, from what they have done, as far as they had ability; we may be aſſured, when they do not want power, they will never want a will to employ violence, to extinguiſh the notions of piety, and the hateful hereſy of religion. It would not be ſtrange if Atheiſtical teſts in ſuch a ſtate of affairs ſhould be formed and impoſed, to keep men of dangerous principles out of all poſts of power and profit; and all that believed the being of a God, and the rewards and puniſhments of another life, ſhould be looked on as diſaffected to the government, and the diſturbers of the public peace.

And if ſuch notions of impiety, and ſuch a degenerate conſtitution of manners, ſhould ever prevail in this unhappy nation, any man without the gift of propheſy, and, indeed, with a very moderate penetration, may foreſee, that the public will then be expoſed to inevitable ruin.

But before the intereſts of virtue and religion are reduced to ſo deplorable a ſtate, it is to be hoped this once wiſe and ſober nation will awaken from its lethargy; that, notwithſtanding the preſent popularity of vice, levity, and impiety, it may one day recover its reliſh of ſolid knowledge and real merit; that buffoons themſelves may one day be expoſed, the laughers in their turn become ridiculous, and an Atheiſtical

ſcoffer be as much out of credit, as a ſober and religious man is at preſent: virtue, ſerioufneſs, and a due reverence of ſacred and divine things, may revive among us; and it is the duty and intereſt of every man that loves his country, and wiſhes well to mankind, to make his utmoſt efforts to bring about ſuch a happy revolution. This would the ſooner be effected, if the virtuous part of ingenious men (for virtue has ſtill a party) would not ſupinely ſtand by, and ſee the honour and intereſt of religion expoſed and inſulted; but, inſtead of an abject, unactive deſpondence, would unite their endeavours, with vigour and reſolution, againſt the common enemies of God and their country. It is great pity, that in ſo noble a cauſe any ſhould ſhow ſuch poorneſs of ſpirit, as to be aſhamed of aſſerting their religion, and ſtemming the tide of impiety, for fear of becoming the entertainment of ſcoffing libertines.

I know the gentlemen of Atheiſtical notions pretend to refined parts, and paſs themſelves upon the world for wits of the firſt rank: yet in debate they decline argument, and rather truſt to the deciſion of raillery. But if it were poſſible for theſe gentlemen to apply themſelves in good earneſt to the reaſons alledged in proof of a Divine Being, in a manner that becomes an enquiry of ſuch conſequence, I ſhould believe their conviction were not to be deſpaired of.

But there is little appearance that they will be ever prevailed on to conſider this matter with deliberate and unprejudiced thought; and, therefore, I am not

ſo

ſo ſanguine to think, that any arguments I can bring, though ever ſo clear and demonſtrative, are likely to make any impreſſion upon a veteran Atheiſt. I have nevertheleſs thought it a ſeaſonable ſervice to endeavour to ſtop the contagion, and, as far as I am able, to preſerve thoſe who are not yet infected.

I would entreat theſe to diſtinguiſh between raillery and argument, and not believe that mirth ought to determine in ſo weighty a caſe; that they would not admit of principles of the utmoſt concern without examination, and take impiety upon content; that they would appeal from the buffoon and the mocker, to the impartial deciſion of right reaſon, and debate this matter with the gravity that becomes the importance of the ſubject.

But, ſince the gentlemen who own no obligations of religion for the rule of behaviour, ſet up in its ſtead a ſpurious principle, which they call honour, and a greatneſs of mind, that will not deſcend to a mean or baſe action; let them reflect, whether that term, as they uſe it, is not an empty ſound without any determined meaning. If honour lays a man under any obligation to perform or forbear any action, then, it is evident, honour is a law or rule, and the tranſgreſſion of it makes us guilty and obnoxious to puniſhment: and if it be a law, it muſt be the declaration of ſome legiſlator's will; for this is the definition of a law that regulates the manners of a moral agent. Now, I aſk a man of honour, who denies religion, what, or whoſe law he breaks, if he deviates from what he ima-

gines a point of honour? It is plain there can be no tranſgreſſion, where there is no law; no irregularity, where there is no rule; nor can a man do a baſe or diſhonourable thing, if he lies under no obligation to the contrary. Honour, therefore, abſtracted from the notion of religion, which enjoins it, is an idle chimera, which can have little power over any man that does not believe a Divine Legiſlator, whoſe authority muſt enforce it.

It is the ſame with friendſhip and gratitude, which are principles that the Atheiſt will often commend. But how is any man bound to be grateful, or to be a friend? Should he act a contrary part, and be treacherous and ungrateful, what guilt has he contracted? Has he offended againſt any law? or can he become guilty, without the breach of any? If you ſay he has broken any law, tell us the law, and by whom it was made. If the laws of the Supreme Being are ſet aſide, we can lie under no regulation, but have an unbounded liberty over all our actions; we may without the leaſt fault or diſhonour break our oaths, ſubvert the government, betray our friends, aſſaſſinate our parents; in ſhort, commit all kinds of the moſt deteſtable crimes without remorſe; for, not being controled by any obligation, we may do whatever our paſſions or our intereſts prompt us to, without being accountable to any tribunal for the leaſt tranſgreſſion.

If it be ſaid, we are obliged by the laws of our country; I anſwer, that as to the actions we are ſpeaking

ing of, ſuch as a man of honour, a great and generous mind, a friend, a grateful perſon, is ſuppoſed to think himſelf obliged to, theſe are ſuch as are not regulated by municipal laws, and therefore men are at liberty whether they will act by what they call a principle of honour or not, and can juſtly incur no cenſure or reproach, ſhould they have no regard to that pompous and ſounding word; for if their actions are not morally determined, either by human or divine laws, they may very juſtly, and honourably too, act with unlimited freedom in theſe matters. Beſides, whoever believes himſelf free from the obligations of divine precepts, cannot look on himſelf as bound by any human laws. He may indeed, from the apprehenſion of puniſhment, forbear an action thus forbidden, and it is his intereſt ſo to do: but, if he thinks no divine authority makes it his duty to ſubmit to the magiſtrate, and obey the laws of his country, he is at liberty, as to any guilt, whether he will obey or no. If he ventures the puniſhment, he eſcapes the ſin. If an Atheiſt ſwears fidelity to his prince, what controling power is he under, which affects the mind, not to betray him, if he think it fit and ſafe to do it? If he lets his parents, or his patron, or his friend periſh, what iniquity is he accountable for?

The exiſtence of a God has been already cleared, and abundantly demonſtrated, by many pious and learned authors; whence this attempt may be cenſured as impertinent and unneceſſary. But all thoſe excellent performances being writ in proſe, and the greateſt part

in the learned languages, or at leaſt in a ſcholaſtic manner, are ill-accommodated to great numbers not of a learned education; and many who have more knowledge, and greater genius, will not undergo the trouble of reading and conſidering the arguments expreſſed in a manner to them obſcure, dry, and diſagreeable. I have therefore formed a poem on this great and important ſubject, that I might give it the advantages peculiar to poetry, and adapt it more to the general apprehenſion and capacity of mankind. The harmony of numbers engages many to read and retain what they would neglect if written in proſe; and I perſuade myſelf the Epicurean philoſophy had not lived ſo long, nor been ſo much eſteemed, had it not been kept alive and propagated by the famous poem of Lucretius.

I have choſen to demonſtrate the exiſtence of a God from the marks of wiſdom, deſign, contrivance, and the choice of ends and means, which appear in the univerſe. Out of the various arguments that evince the truth of this propoſition, "There is a God," I have ſelected this as the moſt evident and intelligible.

I may with reaſon preſume, that I ſhall not incur any cenſure for not employing new arguments to prove the being of a God; none but what have been produced before by many writers, even from the eldeſt days of philoſophy. It was never objected to Lucretius, that, in his applauded poem, he has not invented a new ſyſtem of philoſophy, but only recited in poetical numbers the ancient doctrines of Democritus and Epicurus. Nor can it with reaſon be ſuppoſed, that

the arguments by which he ſupports their opinions were not long before in the ſchools of Greece. Not have modern writers on this ſubject invented, but purſued the demonſtration of a God, from the evident appearance of contrivance and wiſdom in the viſible world, which they have done with more clearneſs and ſtrength, than thoſe who went before them. And while theſe have attempted to evince the exiſtence of a God only from the contemplation of corporeal nature, I have carried the argument on to the actions of living, ſenſitive, and intelligent beings, ſo far as we are acquainted with them; believing that brighter and more noble ſtrokes of wiſdom and deſign appear in the principles of life, ſenſation, and reaſon, than in all the compaſs of the material world.

I have endeavoured to give the ſubject yet greater degrees of perſpicuity, more variety of argument, as well as eaſy and familiar expreſſion, that, the ſtyle being more pleaſing, and the demonſtration more readily apprehended, it may leave a deeper impreſſion, and its effects and uſefulneſs may become more extenſive. In order to this, I have rarely uſed any term of art, or any phraſe peculiar to the writing and converſation of learned men. I have attempted, as Monſieur Fontenelle has done with great ſucceſs in his Plurality of Worlds, to bring philoſophy out of the ſecret receſſes of the ſchools, and ſtrip it of its uncouth and myſterious dreſs, that it may become agreeable, and admitted to a general converſation.

I take

I take it for granted, that no judicious reader will expect, in the philoſophical and argumentative parts of this poem, the ornaments of poetical eloquence. In this caſe, where metaphor and deſcription are not admitted leſt they ſhould darken and enfeeble the argument, if the reaſoning be cloſe, ſtrong, and eaſily apprehended, if there be an elegant ſimplicity, purity, and propriety of words, and a juſt order and connexion of the parts, mutually ſupporting and enlightening one another, there will be all the perfection which the ſtyle can demand.

I may ſafely conclude, that no man will expect that in this poem I ſhould borrow any embelliſhments from the exploded and obſolete theology of the ancient idolaters of Greece or Rome: that I ſhould addreſs any rapturous invocations to their idle deities, or adorn the ſtyle with alluſions to their fabulous actions. I have more than once publickly declared my opinion, that a Chriſtian poet cannot but appear monſtrous and ridiculous in a Pagan dreſs: that though it ſhould be granted, that the heathen religion might be allowed a place in light and looſe ſongs, mock heroic, and the lower lyric compoſitions; yet, in chriſtian poems of the ſublime and greater kind, the mixture of the Pagan theology muſt, by all who are maſters of reflection and good ſenſe, be condemned, if not as impious, at leaſt as impertinent and abſurd. And this is a truth ſo clear and evident, that I make no doubt it will by degrees force its way, and prevail over the contrary practice. Should Britons recover their virtue, and

reform

reform their taſte, they would no more bear the heathen religion in verſe, than in proſe. Chriſtian poets, as well as Chriſtian preachers, the buſineſs of both being to inſtruct the people, though the laſt only are wholly appropriated to it, ſhould endeavour to confirm and ſpread their own true religion. If a divine ſhould begin his ſermon with a ſolemn prayer to Bacchus, or Apollo, to Mars, or Venus, what would the people think of their preacher? And is it not as really, though not equally, abſurd, for a poet in a great and ſerious poem, wherein he celebrates ſome wonderful and happy event of Divine Providence, or magnifies the illuſtrious inſtrument that was honoured to bring the event about, to addreſs his prayer to falſe deities, and cry for help to the abominations of the heathen?

The deſign of this poem is to demonſtrate the ſelf-exiſtence of an Eternal Mind from the created and dependent exiſtence of the univerſe, and to confute the hypotheſis of the Epicureans and the Fataliſts, under whom all the patrons of impiety, ancient or modern, of whatſoever denomination, may be ranged. The firſt of whom affirm the world was in time cauſed by chance; and the other that it exiſted from eternity without a cauſe. It is true, as before mentioned, both theſe acknowledged the exiſtence of Gods; but, by their abſurd and ridiculous deſcription of them, it is plain they had nothing elſe in view, but to avoid the obnoxious character of Atheiſtical philoſophers.

This likewiſe has been often objected to the Deiſts of the preſent times, that at leaſt a great part of them only

only conceal their notions under that name, while they are really to be numbered among the Atheiſts. I have before expreſſed my reaſons, why I cannot embrace this opinion. It is true, indeed, that moſt of the Deiſts maintain a particular friendſhip with the Atheiſts, are pleaſed with their looſe and impious converſation, and appear very tender of their credit and eſteem. They are charitable in crying up their ſhining qualities, and in concealing, excuſing, or leſſening, their immoral actions; while at the ſame time they ſhew an affectation in expoſing the faults and follies of the Chriſtians, eſpecially thoſe who are the moſt ſtrict and regular in their manners, and appear to be moſt in earneſt. It is likewiſe remarkable, that theſe gentlemen expreſs no zeal for the extirpation of irreligious principles: they have never, as fas as I know, written any thing againſt them; nor are they pleaſed in company to declare their deteſtation of ſuch impious maxims, or to produce arguments to confute them; while at the ſame time they take great pains, and ſhow a warm zeal, to weaken the belief of the Chriſtian religion, and to expoſe the pretended errors of its different profeſſors; which ſeems, indeed, ſtrange, ſince he that owns a God and his providence ſhould in reaſon look upon thoſe who believe neither to be infinitely more oppoſite to him, than thoſe who agree with him in the belief of a God, and differ only in the point of revealed religion.

Beſides, it is obſervable that the preſent Deiſts have not drawn and publiſhed any ſcheme of religion, or

catalogues

catalogues of the duties they are obliged to perform, or whence ſuch obligations ariſe. They do not tell us, that they look on man as an accountable creature; nor if they do, for what, and to whom, or when, that account is to be made, and what rewards and puniſhments will attend it. I do not affirm they have no ſuch ſcheme in their thoughts; but, ſince they will not let us know their creed, and in the mean time deride and triumph over that of the Chriſtians, I cannot defend them from thoſe who ſay they are juſtly to be ſuſpected.

And that the Deiſt may clear himſelf from the ſuſpicion of being an Atheiſt, or at leaſt a friend and favourer of their principles; I could wiſh he would in public aſſert and demonſtrate the being of a God and his providence, and declare his abhorrence of the principles of thoſe who diſbelieve them.

It would likewiſe give great ſatisfaction, and remove the objections of thoſe that charge them with direct irreligion, if they would pleaſe to give ſome account of their belief: Whether they look upon God as one who governs mankind by laws to be diſcovered by the light of reaſon, which reſtrain our inclinations and determine our duty; that they would tell us what thoſe laws are, and what ſanctions do enforce them; and until this be done, they cannot well diſcharge themſelves from the ſuſpicion before-mentioned.

And here I would addreſs myſelf to the irreligious gentlemen of the age: and I deſire them not to take up prejudices againſt the exiſtence of a God, and run away

away with impious maxims, until they have exerciſed their conſideration, and made an impartial enquiry into the grounds and reaſons that ſupport the belief of a Divine Eternal Being. In order to ſuch a reaſonable examination, it is but juſt and decent they ſhould be in earneſt, and hear the arguments we offer with temper and patience; that they ſhould inure themſelves to think, and weigh the force of thoſe arguments, as becomes ſincere enquirers after truth. The being of a God, and the duties that reſult from that principle, are ſubjects of the greateſt excellence and dignity in themſelves, and of the greateſt concern and importance to mankind; and, therefore, ſhould never be treated in mirth and ridicule. Generals of armies and counſellors of ſtate, ſenators, and judges, in the great and weighty affairs that come before them, do not put on the air of jeſters and buffoons, and, inſtead of grave and ſolemn debates, aim at nothing but ſallies of wit, and treat their ſubjects and one another only with raillery and deriſion: yet the buſineſs propoſed to the conſideration of the perſons I ſpeak to is, in every reſpect, infinitely ſuperior to any of theirs before-mentioned.

Are they ſure there is no God, and therefore no religion? If they are not, what a terrible riſque do they run! If their reaſons amount only to a probability, the contrary opinion may be true, and that *may be* is enough to give them the moſt frightful apprehenſions, and diſturb them amidſt all the pleaſures they enjoy. But if they ſay they are aſſured, and paſt doubt, there

is no God; let them conſider, confidence in an opinion is not always the effect of certainty and demonſtration. Their predeceſſors, the Atheiſts of former ages, were as certain, that is, as confident, they reaſoned right, as they can be. They cannot pretend to clearer light, and greater aſſurance of the truth of their maxims, than Epicurus and Lucretius did; or inſult their adverſaries with greater contempt than thoſe have done: yet theſe men themſelves, at leaſt many of them, allow thoſe philoſophers were groſsly miſtaken, and will by no means truſt to the Epicurean ſcheme, as the foundation of their opinions. If theſe great maſters, notwithſtanding their unexampled confidence, have been miſtaken, why may not their ſucceſſors be ſo?

If they ſet up Ariſtotle's ſcheme, and think they ſecure their principles by making the world to be eternal, and all effects and events the reſult of ſuch a fatal neceſſity, and an indiſſoluble concatenation of cauſes, as render it impoſſible, that things that are ſhould not be, or that they ſhould be otherwiſe than they are; let them conſider, that the greateſt aſſertors of impiety, I mean, Democritus, Leucippus, Epicurus, and Lucretius, oppoſed this as an idle and incoherent ſyſtem; and that indeed it is ſo, ſhall be after demonſtrated: and ſhould not this ſhake their confidence, that all their friends in the Epicurean ſchools, who were ſufficiently delivered from the prejudices of education and ſuperſtitious impreſſions, could not ſee the leaſt probability in the ſcheme of the Fataliſts, on which

which theſe gentlemen are pleaſed to rely in a matter of the higheſt importance?

Will they confide in Mr. Hobbes? has that philoſopher ſaid any thing new? does he bring any ſtronger forces into the field, than the Epicureans did before him? Will they derive their certainty from Spinoſa? can ſuch an obſcure, perplexed, unintelligible author create ſuch certainty, as leaves no doubt or diſtruſt? if he is indeed to be underſtood, what does he alledge more than the ancient Fataliſts have done, that ſhould amount to demonſtration?

Beſides, if, as they pretend, they are eſtabliſhed beyond poſſibility of deception in the truth of their maxims, why are they ſo very fond of thoſe authors, that ſet up any new doctrine? and why do they embrace with ſo much pleaſure their new ſchemes of irreligion? They are very glad to hear of any great genius, that can invent freſh arguments to ſtrengthen their opinions; and does not this betray a ſecret diffidence, that demands further light and confirmation?

But further: ſince theſe gentlemen ſhew ſo much induſtry in propagating their opinions, and are ſo fond of making proſelytes to Atheiſm; ſince they affect a zeal in countenancing, applauding, and preferring, thoſe whom they have delivered from religious prejudices, and reformed and refined with their free, large, and generous principles; how comes it to paſs, that they neglect to inform and improve their neareſt relations? are they careful to inſtruct their wives and daughters, that they need not revere the imaginary phantom of a God;

God; that religion is the creature of a timorous and ſuperſtitious mind, or of crafty prieſts, and cunning politicians; that therefore they are free from all reſtraints of virtue and conſcience, and may proſtitute their perſons in the moſt licentious manner, without any remorſe, or uneaſy reflection; that it is idle to fear any divine puniſhment hereafter; and as to the ſhame and diſhonour that may attend the liberties they take, in caſe they become public, that ſcandal proceeds from the groſs miſtakes of people perverted with religion, and miſguided by a belief of a Divine Being, and of rewards and puniſhments in an imaginary life after this?

Do they take pains to inform their eldeſt ſons, that they owe them no gratitude or obedience? that they may uſe an uncontroled freedom in indulging all their appetites, paſſions, and inclinations? that, if they are willing to poſſeſs their father's honour and eſtate, they may, by poiſon or the poinard, take away his life; and, if they are careful to avoid the puniſhment of the magiſtrate by their ſecret conduct, they may be fully ſatisfied of the innocence of the action; and as they have done themſelves much good, ſo they have done their father no injury, and therefore may enjoy in perfect tranquillity the fruits of their parricide? Whatever they may affirm among their looſe friends, I cannot conceive they can be guilty of ſo much folly, as to propagate theſe opinions in their own families, and inſtruct their wives and children in the boundleſs liberties, which, by the principles of Atheiſm, are their undoubted

right: for in all actions, where religion does not interpoſe and reſtrain us, we are perfectly, as has been ſaid, free to act as we think beſt for our profit and pleaſure.

Beſides, to what a deplorable condition would mankind be reduced, ſhould theſe opinions be univerſally embraced! If ſo many kings and potentates, who yet profeſs their belief of a God, and of rewards and puniſhments in a life to come, do notwithſtanding, from boundleſs ambition and a cruel temper, oppreſs their ſubjects at home, and ravage and deſtroy their neighbours abroad, ſhould think themſelves free from all divine obligations, and therefore too from the reſtraints of oaths and ſolemn contracts; theſe fences and ſecurities removed, what a deluge of calamities would break in upon the world! what oppreſſion, what violence, what rapine, what devaſtation, would finiſh the ruin of human nature! for, if mighty princes are ſatisfied that it is impoſſible for them to do any wrong, what bounds are left to inſatiable avarice and exorbitant thirſt of power! if monarchs may without the leaſt guilt violate their treaties, break their vows, betray their friends, and ſacrifice their truth and honour at pleaſure to their paſſions, or their intereſt, what truſt, what confidence, could be ſupported between neighbour potentates! and without this, what confuſion and diſtraction muſt of neceſſity enſue!

On the other hand, if ſubjects were univerſally Atheiſts, and looked on themſelves as under no divine obligation to pay any duty or obedience to the ſupreme magiſtrate;

magiſtrate; if they believed that, when they took their oaths of allegiance, they ſwore by nothing, and invocated a power not in being; that therefore thoſe oaths oblige them no longer than they think it ſafe, and for their intereſt, to break them; ſhould ſuch principles obtain, would not the thrones of princes be moſt precarious? would not ambition, revenge, reſentment, or intereſt, continually excite ſome or other to betray or aſſault the lives of their ſovereigns? and why ſhould they be blamed by the Atheiſt for doing it? why are traitors, aſſaſſins, haters of their princes, and enemies to their country, branded with the odious names of ruffians and villains, if they lie under no obligations to act otherwiſe than they do?

Should conſpirators, who aſſaſſinate their lawful ſovereign, have the good fortune to make their eſcape, I aſk the Atheiſt, if he has in the leaſt an ill opinion of them for being engaged in ſuch an execrable undertaking? If he ſays he has not, then the point is gained, and an Atheiſt is what I have repreſented. If he ſays he has, I next aſk him, why? Let him tell me in what their guilt conſiſts? Is it in the breach of any divine law? that cannot be, for he owns none. Is it the tranſgreſſion of any human law? tell me, what obligation he is under to obey any human law, if no divine law enforces ſuch obedience? does their guilt conſiſt in the breach of their duty to their prince and their oaths of allegiance? ſtill the ſame queſtion recurs, what duty can a ſubject owe to a prince which divine laws do not conſtitute and determine? and how can an oath of alle-

giance bind but by virtue of ſome divine command, that obliges us not to violate our vows?

By this it appears that an Atheiſt muſt be the worſt of ſubjects; that his principles ſubvert the thrones of princes, and undermine the foundations of government and ſociety, on which the happineſs of mankind ſo much depends; and therefore it is not poſſible to conceive how there can be a greater diſturber of the public peace, or a greater enemy to his prince and country, than a profeſt Atheiſt, who propagates with zeal his deſtructive opinions.

I have proved, in the following poem, that no hypotheſis hitherto invented in favour of impiety has the leaſt ſtrength or ſolidity, no not the leaſt appearance of truth to recommend it. A man muſt be deſerted of Heaven, and inflexibly hardened, that cannot, or rather will not, ſee the unreaſonableneſs of irreligious principles. I demand only a candid temper in the reader, and a mind pleaſed with truth, and delivered from the prejudices of atheiſtical converſation.

A

SUMMARY ACCOUNT of the following POEM, and of what is contained in each BOOK.

THE deſign of this work is to demonſtrate the exiſtence of a Divine Eternal Mind.

The arguments uſed for this end are taken from the various marks of wiſdom and artful contrivance, which are evident to obſervation in the ſeveral parts of the material world, and the faculties of the human ſoul.

The firſt book contains the proof of a Deity, from the inſtances of deſign and choice, which occur in the ſtructure and qualities of the earth and ſea.

The ſecond purſues the proof of the ſame propoſition, THERE IS A GOD, from the celeſtial motions, and more fully from the appearances in the ſolar ſyſtem and the air

In the third, the objections, which are brought by Atheiſtical philoſophers againſt the hypotheſis eſtabliſhed in the two preceding books, are anſwered.

In the fourth, is laid down the hypotheſis of the Atomiſts or Epicureans, and other irreligious philoſophers, and confuted.

In the fifth, the doctrine of the Fataliſts, or Ariſtotelians, who make the world to be eternal, is conſidered and ſubverted.

In the ſixth, the argument of the two firſt books is reſumed, and the exiſtence of God demonſtrated from

the prudence and art diſcovered in the ſeveral parts of the body of man.

In the ſeventh, the ſame demonſtration is carried on from the contemplation of the inſtincts in brute animals, and the faculties and operations of the ſoul of man. The book concludes with a recapitulation of what has been treated of, and a Hymn to the Creator of the World.

CREATION.

BOOK I.

THE ARGUMENT.

The propoſition. The invocation. The exiſtence of a God demonſtrated, from the marks of wiſdom, choice, and art, which appear in the viſible world, and infer an intelligent and free cauſe. This evinced from the contemplation, I. of the earth. 1. Its ſituation. 2. The cohæſion of its parts, not to be ſolved by any hypotheſis yet produced. 3. Its ſtability. 4. Its ſtructure, or the order of its parts. 5. Its motion diurnal and annual, or elſe the motion of the ſun in both thoſe reſpects. The cauſe of theſe motions not yet accounted for by any philoſopher. 6. Its outſide or face; the beauties and conveniences of it; its mountains, lakes, and rivers. II. The exiſtence of a God proved from the marks and impreſſions of prudence and deſign, which appear in the ſea. 1. In its formation. 2. The proportion of its parts in reſpect of the earthy. 3. Its ſituation. 4. The contexture of its parts. 5. Its brackiſh or briny quality. 6. Its flux and reflux.

NO more of courts, of triumphs, or of arms,
No more of valour's force, or beauty's charms;
The themes of vulgar lays, with juſt diſdain,
I leave unſung, the flocks, the amorous ſwain;
The pleaſures of the land, and terrors of the main.

How abject, how inglorious 'tis to lie
Groveling in duſt and darkneſs, when on high
Empires immenſe and rolling worlds of light,
To range their heavenly ſcenes, the Muſe invite!
I meditate to ſoar above the ſkies,
To heights unknown, through ways untry'd, to riſe:
I would th' Eternal from his works aſſert,
And ſing the wonders of creating art.
While I this unexampled talk eſſay,
Paſs awful gulphs, and beat my painful way;
Celeſtial Dove! divine aſſiſtance bring,
Suſtain me on thy ſtrong extended wing,
That I may reach th' Almighty's ſacred throne,
And make his cauſeleſs power, the cauſe of all things, known.
Thou doſt the full extent of nature ſee,
And the wide realms of vaſt immenſity:
Eternal Wiſdom thou doſt comprehend,
Riſe to her heights, and to her depths deſcend:
The Father's ſecret counſels thou canſt tell,
Who in his boſom didſt for ever dwell:
Thou on the deep's dark face, immortal Dove!
Thou with almighty energy didſt move
On the wild waves, incumbent didſt diſplay
Thy genial wings, and hatch primæval day.
Order from thee, from thee diſtinction came,
And all the beauties of the wondrous frame:
Hence ſtampt on nature we perfection find,
Fair as th' idea in th' Eternal Mind.
See, through this vaſt extended theatre
Of ſkill divine what ſhining marks appear!
Creating power is all around expreſt,
The God diſcover'd, and his care confeſt.

Nature's

Nature's high birth her heavenly beauties ſhow;
By every feature we the parent know.
Th' expanded ſpheres amazing to the ſight,
Magnificent with ſtars and globes of light,
The glorious orbs, which Heaven's bright hoſt compoſe,
Th' impriſon'd ſea, that reſtleſs ebbs and flows,
The fluctuating fields of liquid air,
With all the curious meteors hovering there,
And the wide regions of the land, proclaim
The Power Divine, that rais'd the mighty frame.
What things ſoe'er are to an end referr'd,
And in their motions ſtill that end regard,
Always the fitneſs of the means reſpect,
Theſe as conducive chuſe, and thoſe reject,
Muſt by a judgement foreign and unknown
Be guided to their end, or by their own;
For to deſign an end, and to purſue
That end by means, and have it ſtill in view,
Demands a conſcious, wiſe, reflecting cauſe,
Which freely moves, and acts by reaſon's laws,
That can deliberate, means elect, and find
Their due connexion with the end deſign'd.
And ſince the world's wide frame does not include
A cauſe with ſuch capacities endued;
Some other cauſe o'er nature muſt preſide,
Which gave her birth, and does her motions guide.
And here behold the cauſe, which God we name,
The ſource of beings, and the mind ſupreme;
Whoſe perfect wiſdom, and whoſe prudent care,
With one confederate voice unnumber'd worlds declare.

See,

See, how the earth has gain'd that very place,
Which of all others in the boundleſs ſpace
Is moſt convenient, and will beſt conduce
To the wiſe ends requir'd for nature's uſe.
You, who the mind and cauſe ſupreme deny,
Nor on his aid to form the world rely,
Muſt grant, had perfect wiſdom been employ'd
To find, through all th' interminable void,
A ſeat moſt proper, and which beſt became
The earth and ſea, it muſt have been the ſame.
Now, who can this ſurprizing fact conceive,
Who this event fortuitous believe,
That the brute earth unguided ſhould embrace
The only uſeful, only proper place
Of all the millions in the empty ſpace?
Could ſtupid atoms with impetuous ſpeed
By different roads and adverſe ways proceed;
From regions oppoſite begin their flight,
That here they might rencounter, here unite;
What charms could theſe terreſtrial vagrants ſee
In this one point of all immenſity,
That all th' enamour'd troops ſhould thither flow?
Did they its uſeful ſituation know?
And, when the ſquadrons with a ſwift career
Had reach'd that point, why did they ſettle there,
When nothing check'd their flight, but gulphs of air;
Since Epicurus and his ſcholars ſay
That unobſtructed matter flies away,
Ranges the void, and knows not where to ſtay?

If

If you, ſagacious ſons of art, pretend
That by their native force they did deſcend,
And ceas'd to move, when they had gain'd their end;
That native force till you inlighten'd know,
Can its myſterious ſpring diſcloſe, and ſhow
How 'tis exerted, how it does impel,
Your uninſtructive words no doubts diſpel.
We aſk you, whence does motive vigour flow?
You ſay, the nature of the thing is ſo.
But how does this relieve th' enquirer's pain?
Or how the dark impulſive power explain?
The Atomiſts, who ſkill mechanic teach,
Who boaſt their clearer ſight, and deeper reach,
Aſſert their atoms took that happy ſeat,
Determin'd thither by their inbred weight;
That downward through the ſpacious void they ſtrove
To that one point, from all the parts above.
Grant this poſition true, though up and down
Are to a ſpace not limited unknown;
But ſince they ſay our earth from morn to morn
On its own axis is oblig'd to turn;
That ſwift rotation muſt diſperſe in air
All things, which on the rapid orb appear:
And if no power that motion ſhould control,
It muſt disjoint and diſſipate the whole.
'Tis by experience unconteſted found,
Bodies orbicular, when whirling round,
Still ſhake off all things on their ſurface plac'd,
And to a diſtance from the centre caſt.
If ponderous atoms are ſo much in love
With this one point, that all will thither move,

Give

Give them the ſituation they deſire;
But let us then, ye ſages, next enquire,
What cauſe of their coheſion can you find?
What props ſupport, what chains the fabrick bind?
Why do not beaſts that move, or ſtones that lie
Looſe on the field, through diſtant regions fly?
Or why do fragments, from a mountain rent,
Tend to the earth with ſuch a ſwift deſcent?
Thoſe who aſcribe this one determin'd courſe
Of ponderous things to gravitating force,
Refer us to a quality occult,
To ſenſeleſs words, for which while they inſult
With juſt contempt the famous Stagyrite,
Their ſchools ſhould bleſs the world with clearer light.
Some, the round earth's coheſion to ſecure,
For that hard taſk employ magnetic power.
Remark, ſay they, the globe; with wonder own
Its nature, like the fam'd attractive ſtone.
This has its axis, ſo th' obſerver tells,
Meridians, poles, æquator, parallels.
To the terreſtrial poles by conſtant fate
Th' obſequious poles themſelves accommodate,
And, when of this poſition diſpoſſeſt,
They move, and ſtrive, nor ever will they reſt,
Till their lov'd ſituation they regain,
Where pleas'd they ſettle, and unmov'd remain.
And ſhould you, ſo experience does decide,
Into ſmall parts the wondrous ſtone divide,
Ten thouſand of minuteſt ſize expreſs
The ſame propenſion, which the large poſſeſs.

Hence

Hence all the globe ('tis ſaid) we may conclude
With this prevailing energy endued:
That this attractive, this ſurprizing ſtone
Has no peculiar virtue of its own;
Nothing but what is common to the whole,
To ſides, to axis, and to either pole.
The mighty magnet from the centre darts
This ſtrong, though ſubtle force, through all the parts;
Its active rays, ejaculated thence,
Irradiate all the wide circumference.
While every part is in proportion bleſt,
And of its due attractive power poſſeſt;
While adverſe ways the adverſe atoms draw
With the ſame ſtrength, by nature's conſtant law
Balanc'd and fixt; they can no longer move;
Through gulphs immenſe no more unguided rove.
If cords are pull'd two adverſe ways, we find
The more we draw them, they the faſter bind.
So when with equal vigour Nature ſtrains
This way and that theſe fine mechanic chains,
They fix the earth, they part to part unite,
Preſerve their ſtructure, and prevent their flight.
Preſſure, they ſay, and weight, we muſt diſown,
As things occult, by no ideas known,
And on the earth's magnetic power depend
To fix its ſeat, its union to defend.
Let us this fam'd hypotheſis ſurvey,
And with attentive thought remark the way,
How earth's attractive parts their force diſplay.
The maſs, 'tis ſaid, from its wide boſom pours
Torrents of atoms, and eternal ſhowers

Of

Of fine magnetic darts, of matter made
So ſubtle, marble they with eaſe pervade:
Refin'd, and (next to incorporeal) thin,
Not by Auſonian glaſſes to be ſeen.
Theſe emanations take their conſtant flight
Swift from the earth, as from the ſun the light;
To a determin'd diſtance they aſcend,
And there inflect their courſe, and downward tend.
What can inſult unequal Reaſon more,
Than this magnetic, this myſterious power?
That cords and chains, beyond conception ſmall,
Should gird and bind ſo faſt this mighty ball!
That active rays ſhould ſpring from every part,
And, though ſo ſubtle, ſhould ſuch force exert!
That the light legions ſhould be ſent abroad,
Range all the air, and traverſe every road!
To ſtated limits ſhould excurſions make,
Then backward of themſelves their journey take;
Should in their way to ſolid bodies cling,
And home to earth the captive matter bring;
Where all things on its ſurface ſpread are bound
By their coercive vigour to the ground!
Can this be done without a Guide Divine?
Should we to this hypotheſis incline?
Say, does not here conſpicuous Wiſdom ſhine?
Who can enough magnetic force admire?
Does it not counſel and deſign require
To give the earth this wondrous energy,
In ſuch a meaſure, ſuch a juſt degree,
That it ſhould ſtill perform its deſtin'd taſk,
As nature's ends and various uſes aſk?

For,

For, ſhould our globe have had a greater ſhare
Of this ſtrong force, by which the parts cohere,
Things had been bound by ſuch a powerful chain,
That all would fix'd and motionleſs remain;
All men, like ſtatues, on the earth would ſtand,
Nor would they move the foot, or ſtretch the hand;
Birds would not range the ſkies, nor beaſts the woods,
Nor could the fiſh divide the ſtiffen'd floods.
Again, had this ſtrange energy been leſs,
Defect had been as fatal as exceſs.
For want of cement ſtrong enough to bind
The ſtructure faſt, huge ribs of rock, disjoin'd
Without an earthquake, from their baſe would ſtart,
And hills unhing'd from their deep roots depart.
And, while our orb perform'd its daily race,
All beings, found upon its ample face,
Would, by that motion diſſipated, fly
Whirl'd from the globe, and ſcatter through the ſky:
They muſt, obedient to mechanic laws,
Aſſemble where the ſtronger magnet draws;
Whether the Sun that ſtronger magnet proves,
Or elſe ſome planet's orb that nearer moves.
Who can unfold the cauſe that does recall
Magnetic rays, and make them backward fall?
If theſe effluvia, which do upward tend,
Becauſe leſs heavy than the air, aſcend;
Why do they ever from their height retreat,
And why return to ſeek their central ſeat?
From the ſame cauſe, ye ſons of art, declare
Can they by turns deſcend, and riſe in air?

Prodigious

Prodigious 'tis, that one attractive ray
Should this way bend, the next an adverſe way;
For, ſhould th' unſeen magnetic jets deſcend
All the ſame way, they could not gain their end;
They could not draw and bind the fabrick faſt,
Unleſs alike they every part embrac'd.
How does Carteſius all his ſinews ſtrain,
How much he labours, and how much in vain,
The earth's attractive vigour to explain!
This bold contriver thus his thoughts conveys:
Inceſſant ſtreams of thin magnetic rays
Guſh from their fountains, with impetuous force,
In either pole, then take an adverſe courſe:
Thoſe from the Southern pole the Northern ſeek;
The Southern thoſe that from the Northern break:
In either pole theſe rays emitted meet
Small pores provided, for their figures fit;
Still to and fro they circulating paſs,
Hold all the frame, and firmly bind the maſs.
Thus he the parts of earth from flight reſtrains,
And girds it faſt by fine imagin'd chains.
But oh! how dark is human reaſon found!
How vain the man, with wit and learning crown'd!
How feeble all his ſtrength, when he eſſays
To trace dark Nature, and detect her ways;
Unleſs he calls its Author to his aid,
Who every ſecret ſpring of motion laid,
Who over all his wondrous works preſides,
And to their uſeful ends their cauſes guides!
Theſe paths in vain are by enquirers trod;
There 's no philoſophy without a God.

Admir'd Carteſius, let the curious know,
If your magnetic atoms always flow
From pole to pole, what form'd their double ſource,
What ſpur'd, what gave them their inflected courſe?
Tell, what could drill and perforate the poles,
And to th' attractive rays adapt their holes?
A race ſo long what prompts them to purſue?
Have the blind troops th' important end in view?
How are they ſure they in the poles ſhall meet
Pores of a figure to their figure fit?
Are they with ſuch ſagacity endued
To know, if this their journey be purſued,
They ſhall the earth's conſtructure cloſely bind,
And to the centre keep the parts confin'd?
Let us review this whole magnetic ſcheme,
Till wiſer heads a wiſer model frame.
For its formation let fit atoms ſtart,
To one determin'd point, from every part.
Encountering there from regions oppoſite,
They claſh, and interrupt each other's flight;
And, rendezvouſing with an adverſe courſe,
Produce an equal poiſe, by equal force:
For while the parts by laws magnetic act,
And are at once attracted and attract;
While match'd in ſtrength they keep the doubtful field,
And neither overcome, and neither yield,
To happy purpoſe they their vigour ſpend;
For theſe contentions in the balance end,
Which muſt in liquid air the globe ſuſpend.
Beſides materials which are brute and blind,
Did not this work require a Knowing Mind,

Who for the taſk ſhould fit detachments chuſe
From all the atoms, which their hoſt diffuſe
Through the wide regions of the boundleſs ſpace,
And for their rendezvous appoint the place?
Who ſhould command, by his almighty nod,
Theſe choſen troops, unconſcious of the road,
And unacquainted with th' appointed end,
Their marches to begin, and thither tend;
Direct them all to take the neareſt way,
Whence none of all th' unnumber'd millions ſtray;
Make them advance with ſuch an equal pace,
From all the adverſe regions of the ſpace,
That they at once ſhould reach the deſtin'd place;
Should muſter there, and round the centre ſwarm,
And draw together in a globous form?
  Grant, that by mutual oppoſition made
Of adverſe parts, their mutual flight is ſtaid;
That thus the whole is in a balance laid;
Does it not all mechanic heads confound,
That troops of atoms, from all parts around,
Of equal number, and of equal force,
Should to this ſingle point direct their courſe;
That ſo the counter-preſſure every way,
Of equal vigour, might their motions ſtay,
And, by a ſteady poiſe, the whole in quiet lay?
  Beſides, the ſtructure of the earth regard:
For firmneſs how is all its frame prepar'd!
With what amazing ſkill is the vaſt building rear'd!
Metals and veins of ſolid ſtone are found
The chief materials, which the globe compound.

See,

See, how the hills, which high in air aſcend,
From pole to pole their lofty lines extend.
  Theſe ſtrong unſhaken mounds reſiſt the ſhocks
Of tides and ſeas tempeſtuous, while the rocks,
That ſecret in a long continued vein
Paſs through the earth, the ponderous pile ſuſtain:
Theſe mighty girders, which the fabrick bind,
Theſe ribs robuſt and vaſt, in order join'd;
Theſe ſubterranean walls, diſpos'd with art,
Such ſtrength, and ſuch ſtability impart,
That ſtorms above, and earthquakes under ground,
Break not the pillars, nor the work confound.
  Give to the earth a form orbicular,
Let it be pois'd, and hung in ambient air;
Give it the ſituation to the ſun
Such as is only fit; when this is done,
Suppoſe it ſtill remain'd a lazy heap;
From what we grant, you no advantage reap.
You either muſt the earth from reſt diſturb,
Or roll around the heavens the ſolar orb.
Elſe what a dreadful face will nature wear!
How horrid will theſe loneſome ſeats appear!
This ne'er would ſee one kind refreſhing ray;
That would be ruin'd, but a different way,
Condemn'd to light, and curs'd with endleſs day;
A cold Icelandian deſert one would grow;
One, like Sicilian furnaces, would glow.
  That nature may this fatal error ſhun,
Move, which will pleaſe you beſt, the earth or ſun.
But, ſay, from what great builder's magazines
You 'll engines fetch, what ſtrong, what vaſt machines

Will you employ to give this motion birth,
And whirl ſo ſwiftly round the ſun or earth?
Yet, learned heads, by what mechanic laws
Will you of either orb this motion cauſe?
Why do they move? why in a circle? why
With ſuch a meaſure of velocity?
Say, why the earth—if not the earth, the ſun
Does through his winding road the Zodiack run?
Why do revolving orbs their tracks ſublime
So conſtant keep, that ſince the birth of time
They never vary'd their accuſtom'd place,
Nor loſt a minute in ſo long a race?
But hold! perhaps I rudely preſs too far;
You are not vers'd in reaſoning ſo ſevere.
To a firſt queſtion your reply's at hand;
Aſk but a ſecond, and you ſpeechleſs ſtand.
You ſwim at top, and on the ſurface ſtrive,
But to the depths of nature never dive:
For if you did, inſtructed you'd explore
Divine contrivance, and a God adore.
Yet ſons of art one curious piece deviſe,
From whoſe conſtructure motion ſhall ariſe.
Machines, to all philoſophers 'tis known,
Move by a foreign impulſe, not their own.
Then let Gaſſendus chuſe what frame he pleaſe,
By which to turn the heavenly orbs with eaſe;
Thoſe orbs muſt reſt, till by th' exerted force
Of ſome firſt mover they begin their courſe:
Meer diſpoſition, meer mechanic art,
Can never motion to the globes impart;

And,

And, if they could, the marks of wiſe deſign
In that contrivance would conſpicuous ſhine.
Theſe queſtions ſtill recur: we ſtill demand,
What moves them firſt, and puts them off at hand?
What makes them this one way their race direct,
While they a thouſand other ways reject?
Why do they never once their courſe inflect?
Why do they roll with ſuch an equal pace,
And to a moment ſtill perform their race?
Why earth or ſun diurnal ſtages keep?
In ſpiral tracks why through the zodiac creep?
Who can account for this, unleſs they ſay
Theſe orbs th' Eternal Mind's command obey,
Who bad them move, did all their motions guide,
To each its deſtin'd province did divide;
Which to compleat, he gave them motive power,
That ſhall, as long as he does will, endure?
Thus we the frame of nature have expreſt;
Now view the earth in finiſh'd beauty dreſt;
The various ſcenes, which various charms diſplay,
Through all th' extended theatre ſurvey.
See how ſublime th' uplifted mountains riſe,
And with their pointed heads invade the ſkies!
How the high cliffs their craggy arms extend,
Diſtinguiſh ſtates, and ſever'd realms defend!
How ambient ſhores confine the reſtleſs deep,
And in their ancient bounds the billows keep!
The hollow vales their ſmiling pride unfold;
What rich abundance do their boſoms hold!
Regard their lovely verdure, raviſh'd view
The party-colour'd flowers of various hue!

Not Eaſtern monarchs, on their nuptial day,
In dazzling gold and purple ſhine ſo gay
As the bright natives of th' unlabour'd field,
Unverſt in ſpinning, and in looms unſkill'd.
See, how the ripening fruits the gardens crown,
Imbibe the ſun, and make his light their own!
See the ſweet brooks in ſilver mazes creep,
Enrich the meadows, and ſupply the deep;
While from their weeping urns the fountains flow,
And vital moiſture, where they paſs, beſtow!
Admire the narrow ſtream, and ſpreading lake,
The proud aſpiring grove, and humble brake:
How do the foreſts and the woods delight!
How the ſweet glades and openings charm the ſight!
Obſerve the pleaſant lawn and airy plain,
The fertile furrows rich with various grain;
How uſeful all! how all conſpire to grace
Th' extended earth, and beautify her face!
Now, ſee, with how much art the parts are made;
With how much wiſdom are the ſtrata laid,
Of different weight, and of a different kind,
Of ſundry forms, for ſundry ends deſign'd!
Here in their beds the finiſh'd minerals reſt,
There the rich wombs the ſeeds of gold digeſt.
Here in fit moulds, to Indian nations known,
Are caſt the ſeveral kinds of precious ſtone;
The diamond here, by mighty monarchs worn,
Fair as the ſtar that beautifies the morn;
And, ſplendid by the ſun's embody'd ray,
The rubies there their crimſon light diſplay;

There marble's various colour'd veins are ſpread;
Here of bitumen unctuous ſtores are bred.
What ſkill on all its ſurface is beſtow'd,
To make the earth for man a fit abode!
The upper moulds, with active ſpirits ſtor'd,
And rich in verdant progeny, afford
The flowery paſture, and the ſhady wood,
To men their phyſick, and to beaſts their food.
Proceed yet farther, and a proſpect take
Of the ſwift ſtream, and of the ſtanding lake.
Had not the deep been form'd, that might contain
All the collected treaſures of the main,
The earth had ſtill o'erwhelm'd with water ſtood,
To man an uninhabitable flood.
Yet had not part as kindly ſtaid behind,
In the wide ciſterns of the lakes confin'd,
Did not the ſprings and rivers drench the land,
Our globe would grow a wilderneſs of ſand;
The plants and groves, the tame and ſavage beaſt,
And man, their lord, would die with drought oppreſt.
Now, as you ſee, the floating element
Part looſe in ſtreams, part in the ocean pent,
So wiſely is diſpos'd, as may conduce
To man's delight, or neceſſary uſe.
See how the mountains in the midſt divide
The nobleſt regions, that from either ſide
The ſtreams, which to the hills their currents owe,
May every way along the valley flow,
And verdant wealth on all the ſoil beſtow!
So Atlas and the mountains of the moon,
From north to ſouth, in lofty ridges run

Through Afric realms, whence falling waters lave
Th' inferior regions with a winding wave.
They various rivers give to various ſoil,
Niger to Guinea, and to Ægypt Nile.
So from the towering Alps, on different ſides,
Diſſolving ſnows deſcend in numerous tides,
Which in the vale beneath their parties join
To form the Rhone, the Danube, and the Rhine.
So Caucaſus, aſpiring Taurus ſo,
And fam'd Imaüs, ever white with ſnow,
Through eaſtern climes their lofty lines extend,
And this and that way ample currents ſend.
A thouſand rivers make their crooked way,
And diſembogue their floods into the ſea;
Whence ſhould they ne'er by ſecret roads retire,
And to the hills, from whence they came, aſpire;
They by their conſtant ſtreams would ſo encreaſe
The watery ſtores, and raiſe ſo high the ſeas,
That the wide hollow would not long contain
Th' unequal treaſures of the ſwelling main;
Scorning the mounds which now its tide withſtand,
The ſea would paſs the ſhores, and drown the land.
Tell, by what paths, what ſubterranean ways,
Back to the fountain's head the ſea conveys
The refluent rivers, and the land repays?
Tell, what ſuperior, what controling cauſe
Makes waters, in contempt of nature's laws,
Climb up, and gain th' aſpiring mountains height,
Swift and forgetful of their native weight?

What

What happy works, what engines under-ground,
What inſtruments of curious art are found,
Which muſt with everlaſting labour play,
Back to their ſprings the rivers to convey,
And keep their correſpondence with the ſea?
Perhaps you 'll ſay, their ſtreams the rivers owe
In part to rain, in part to melting ſnow;
And that th' attracted watery vapours riſe
From lakes and ſeas, and fill the lower ſkies:
Theſe when condens'd the airy region pours
On the dry earth in rain, or gentle ſhowers;
Th' inſinuating drops ſink through the ſand,
And paſs the porous ſtrainers of the land;
Which freſh ſupplies of watery riches bring
To every river's head, to each exhauſted ſpring;
The ſtreams are thus, their loſſes to repair,
Back to their ſource tranſmitted through the air;
The waters ſtill their circling courſe maintain,
Flow down in rivers, and return in rain;
And on the ſoil with heat immoderate dry'd,
To which the rain's pure treaſures are deny'd,
The mountains more ſublime in æther riſe,
Transfix the clouds, and tower amidſt the ſkies;
The ſnowy fleeces, which their heads involve,
Still ſtay in part, and ſtill in part diſſolve;
Torrents and loud impetuous cataracts
Through roads abrupt, and rude unfaſhion'd tracts,
Roll down the lofty mountain's channel'd ſides,
And to the vale convey their foaming tides;
At length, to make their various currents one,
The congregated floods together run;

Theſe

Theſe confluent ſtreams make ſome great river's head,
By ſtores ſtill melting and deſcending fed;
Thus from th' aſpiring mountains of the moon
Diſſolving treaſures ruſh in torrents down,
Which paſs the ſun-burnt realms and ſandy ſoil,
And bleſs th' Ægyptian nation with their Nile;
Then whoſoe'er his ſecret riſe would know,
Muſt climb the hills, and trace his head in ſnow;
And through the Rhine, the Danube, and the Rhone,
All ample rivers of our milder zone,
While they advance along the flats and plains,
Spread by the ſhowers augmented, and the rains;
Yet theſe their ſource and firſt beginning owe
To ſtores, that from the Alpine mountains flow;
Hence, when the ſnows in winter ceaſe to weep,
And undiſſolv'd their flaky texture keep,
The banks with eaſe their humble ſtreams contain,
Which ſwell in ſummer, and thoſe banks diſdain.
Be this account allow'd, ſay, do not here
Th' impreſſions of conſummate art appear?
In every ſpacious realm a riſing ground,
Obſervers tell, is in the middle found;
That all the ſtreams, which flow from either ſide,
May through the valleys unobſtructed glide.
What various kingdoms does the Danube lave,
Before the Euxine ſea receives its wave!
How many nations of the ſun-burnt ſoil
Fam'd Niger bleſs! how many drink the Nile!
Through what vaſt regions near the riſing ſun
Does Indus, Ganges, and Hydaſpes, run!

What

What happy empires, wide Euphrates, teem,
And pregnant grow by thy prolific ſtream!
How many ſpacious countries does the Rhine,
In winding banks, and mazes ſerpentine,
Traverſe, before he ſplits in Belgia's plain,
And loſt in ſand creeps to the Germain main!
Floods which through Indian realms their courſe purſue,
That Mexico enrich, and waſh Peru,
With their unwearied ſtreams yet farther paſs,
Before they reach the ſea, and end their race.
And ſince the rivers and the floods demand,
For their deſcent, a prone and ſinking land,
Does not this due declivity declare
A wiſe Director's providential care?
  See, how the ſtreams advancing to the main
Through crooked channels draw their cryſtal train!
While lingering thus they in meanders glide,
They ſcatter verdant life on either ſide.
The valleys ſmile, and with their flowery face
And wealthy births confeſs the floods embrace.
But this great bleſſing would in part be loſt,
Nor would the meads their blooming plenty boaſt;
Did uncheck'd rivers draw their fluid train
In lines direct, and rapid ſeek the main.
  The ſea does next demand our view; and there
No leſs the marks of perfect ſkill appear.
When firſt the atoms to the congreſs came,
And by their concourſe form'd the mighty frame,
What did the liquid to th' aſſembly call,
To give their aid to form the ponderous ball?

Firſt,

Firſt, tell us, why did any come? next, why
In ſuch a diſproportion to the dry?
Why were the moiſt in number ſo outdone,
That to a thouſand dry, they are but one?
When they united, and together clung,
When undiſtinguiſh'd in one heap they hung,
How was the union broke, the knot unty'd,
What did th' entangled elements divide?
Why did the moiſt disjoin'd, without reſpect
To their leſs weight, the loweſt ſeat elect?
Could they diſpenſe to lie below the land,
With nature's law, and unrepeal'd command;
Which gives to lighter things the greateſt height,
And ſeats inferior to ſuperior weight?
Did they foreſee, unleſs they lay ſo low,
The reſtleſs flood the land would overflow,
By which the delug'd earth would uſeleſs grow?
What, but a conſcious agent, could provide
The ſpacious hollow, where the waves reſide?
Where, bar'd with rock, and fenc'd with hills, the deep
Does in its womb the floating treaſures keep;
And all the raging regiments reſtrain
In ſtated limits, that the ſwelling main
May not in triumph o'er the frontier ride,
And through the land licentious ſpread its tide?
What other cauſe the frame could ſo contrive,
That, when tempeſtuous winds the ocean drive,
They cannot break the tye, nor diſunite
The waves, which roll connected in their flight?

Their

Their bands, though ſlack, no diſſolution fear,
Th' unſever'd parts the greateſt preſſure bear,
Though looſe, and fit to flow, they ſtill cohere.
This apt, this wiſe contexture of the ſea,
Makes it the ſhips driv'n by the winds obey;
Whence hardy merchants ſail from ſhore to ſhore,
Bring Indian ſpices home, and Guinea's ore.
When you with liquid ſtores have fill'd the deep,
What does the flood from putrefaction keep?
Should it lie ſtagnant in its ample ſeat,
The ſun would through it ſpread deſtructive heat.
The wiſe Contriver, on his end intent,
Careful this fatal error to prevent,
And keep the waters from corruption free,
Mixt them with ſalt, and ſeaſon'd all the ſea.
What other cauſe could this effect produce?
The brackiſh tincture through the main diffuſe?
You, who to ſolar beams this taſk aſſign,
To ſcald the waves, and turn the tide to brine,
Reflect, that all the fluid ſtores, which ſleep
In the remoteſt caverns of the deep,
Have of the briny force a greater ſhare,
Than thoſe above, that meet the ambient air.
Others, but oh how much in vain! erect
Mountains of ſalt, the ocean to infect.
Who, vers'd in nature, can deſcribe the land,
Or fix the place on which thoſe mountains ſtand?
Why have thoſe rocks ſo long unwaſted ſtood,
Since, laviſh of their ſtock, they through the flood,
Have, ages paſt, their melting cryſtal ſpred,
And with their ſpoils the liquid regions fed?

Yet

Yet more, the wiſe Contriver did provide,
To keep the ſea from ſtagnating the tide;
Which now we ſee advance, and now ſubſide.
If you exclude this great Directing Mind,
Declare what cauſe of this effect you find.
You who this globe round its own axis drive,
From that rotation this event derive:
You ſay, the ſea, which with unequal pace
Attends the earth in this its rapid race,
Does with its waves fall backward to the weſt,
And, thence repell'd, advances to the eaſt:
While this revolving motion does endure,
The deep muſt reel, and ruſh from ſhore to ſhore:
Thus to the ſetting, and the riſing ſun,
Alternate tides in ſtated order run.
Th' experiments you bring us, to explain
This notion, are impertinent and vain.
An orb or ball round its own axis whirl;
Will not the motion to a diſtance hurl
Whatever duſt or ſand you on it place,
And drops of water from its convex face?
If this rotation does the ſeas affect,
The rapid motion rather would eject
The ſtores the low capacious caves contain,
And from its ample baſin caſt the main;
Aloft in air would make the ocean fly,
And daſh its ſcatter'd waves againſt the ſky.
If you, to ſolve th' appearance, have recourſe
To the bright ſun's, or moon's impulſive force;
Do you, who call for demonſtration, tell
How diſtant orbs th' obedient flood impel?

This

This ſtrong myſterious influence explain,
By which, to ſwell the waves, they preſs the main.
But if you chuſe magnetic power, and ſay
Thoſe bodies by attraction move the ſea;
Till with new light you make this ſecret known,
And tell us how 'tis by attraction done,
You leave the mind in darkneſs ſtill involv'd,
Nor have you, like philoſophers, reſolv'd
The doubts, which we to reaſoning men refer,
But with a cant of words abuſe the ear.
  Thoſe, who aſſert the lunar orb preſides
O'er humid bodies, and the ocean guides:
Whoſe waves obſequious ebb, or ſwelling run,
With the declining or increaſing moon;
With reaſon ſeem her empire to maintain,
As miſtreſs of the rivers and the main.
Perhaps her active influences cauſe
Th' alternate flood, and give the billow laws;
The waters ſeem her orders to obey,
And ebb and flow, determin'd by her ſway.
  Grant that the deep this foreign ſovereign owns,
That mov'd by her it this and that way runs.
Say, by what force ſhe makes the ocean ſwell,
Does ſhe attract the waters, or impel?
How does ſhe rule the rolling waves, and guide
By fixt and conſtant laws the reſtleſs tide?
Why does ſhe dart her force to that degree,
As gives ſo juſt a motion to the ſea,
That it ſhould flow no more, no more retire,
Than nature's various uſeful ends require?

A Mind Supreme you therefore muſt approve,
Whoſe high command caus'd matter firſt to move:
Who ſtill preſerves its courſe, and, with reſpect
To his wiſe ends, all motions does direct.
He to the ſilver moon this province gave,
And fixt her empire o'er the briny wave;
Endued her with ſuch juſt degrees of power,
As might his aims and wiſe deſigns procure,
Might agitate and work the troubled deep,
And rolling waters from corruption keep,
But not impel them o'er their bounds of ſand,
Nor force the waſteful deluge o'er the land.

CREATION.

BOOK II.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Introduction. The numerous and important bleſſings of religion. The exiſtence of a God demonſtrated, from the wiſdom and deſign which appear in the motions of the heavenly orbs; but more particularly in the ſolar ſyſtem. I. In the ſituation of the ſun, and its due diſtance from the earth. The fatal conſequences of its having been placed otherwiſe than it is. II. In its diurnal motion, whence the change of day and night proceeds: then in its annual motion, whence ariſe the different degrees of heat and cold. The confinement of the ſun between the tropicks, not to be accounted for by any philoſophical hypotheſis. The difficulties of the ſame, if the earth moves, and the ſun reſts. The ſpring of the ſun's motion, not to be explained by any irreligious philoſophy. The contemplation of the ſolar light, and the uſes made of it for the end propoſed. The appearances in the ſolar ſyſtem not to be ſolved, but by aſſerting a God. The ſyſtems of Ptolomy, Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, and Kepler, conſidered. The ſolar ſyſtem deſcribed, and compared with the fixed ſtars, which are ſuppoſed centres of the like ſyſtems. Reflections on that compariſon. The hy-

 potheſis

poſheſis of Epicurus, in relation to the motion of the ſun. Wiſdom and deſign diſcovered in the air; in its uſeful ſtructure, its elaſticity, its various meteors; the wind, the rain, thunder, and lightning. A ſhort contemplation of the vegetable kind.

CARUS, by hardy Epicurus taught,
From Greece to Rome his impious ſyſtem brought;
Then war with Heaven he did inſulting wage,
And breath'd againſt the Gods immortal rage:
See, he exclaims, the ſource of all our woe!
Our fears and ſufferings from Religion flow.
We grant, a train of miſchiefs oft' proceeds
From ſuperſtitious rites and penal creeds;
But view Religion in her native charms,
Diſperſing bleſſings with indulgent arms,
From her fair eyes what heavenly rays are ſpread!
What blooming joys ſmile round her bliſsful head!
Offspring divine! by thee we bleſs the Cauſe,
Who form'd the world, and rules it by his laws;
His independent being we adore,
Extoll his goodneſs, and revere his power;
Our wondering eyes his high perfections view,
The lofty contemplation we purſue,
Till raviſh'd we the great idea find,
Shining in bright impreſſions on our mind.
Inſpir'd by thee, gueſt of celeſtial race,
With generous love, we human-kind embrace;
We provocations unprovok'd receive,
Patient of wrong, and eaſy to forgive;

Protect

Protect the orphan, plead the widow's cauſe,
Nor deviate from the line unerring juſtice draws.
Thy luſtre, bleſt effulgence, can diſpell
The clouds of error, and the gloom of hell;
Can to the ſoul impart etherial light,
Give life divine and intellectual ſight:
Before our raviſh'd eyes thy beams diſplay
The opening ſcenes of bliſs, and endleſs day;
By which incited, we with ardour riſe,
Scorn this inferior ball, and claim the ſkies.
Tyrants to thee a change of nature owe,
Diſmiſs their tortures, and indulgent grow.
Ambitious conquerors in their mad career,
Check'd by thy voice, lay down the ſword and ſpear.
The boldeſt champions of impiety,
Scornful of Heaven, ſubdued or won by thee,
Before thy hallow'd altars bend the knee;
Looſe wits, made wiſe, a public good become,
The ſons of pride an humble mien aſſume;
The profligate in morals grow ſevere,
Defrauders juſt, and ſycophants ſincere.
With amorous language and bewitching ſmiles,
Attractive airs, and all the lover's wiles,
The fair Ægyptian Jacob's ſon careſs'd,
Hung on his neck, and languiſh'd on his breaſt;
Courted with freedom now the beauteous ſlave,
Now flattering ſued, and threatening now did rave:
But not the various eloquence of love,
Nor power enrag'd, could his fix'd virtue move.
See, aw'd by Heaven, the blooming Hebrew flies
Her artful tongue, and more perſuaſive eyes;

And, ſpringing from her diſappointed arms,
Prefers a dungeon to forbidden charms.
Stedfaſt in virtue's and his country's cauſe,
Th' illuſtrious founder of the Jewiſh laws,
Who, taught by Heaven, at genuine greatneſs aim'd,
With worthy pride imperial blood diſclaim'd;
Th' alluring hopes of Pharoah's throne reſign'd,
And the vain pleaſures of a court declin'd,
Pleas'd with obſcure receſs, to eaſe the pains
Of Jacob's race, and break their ſervile chains;
Such generous minds are form'd, where bleſt Religion reigns.
Ye friends of Epicurus, look around,
All nature view with marks of prudence crown'd.
Mind the wiſe ends, which proper means promote;
See how the different parts for different uſe are wrought;
Contemplate all this conduct and deſign,
Then own, and praiſe, th' Artificer Divine.
Regard the orbs ſublime in æther borne,
Which the blue regions of the ſkies adorn;
Compar'd with whoſe extent, this low-hung ball,
Shrunk to a point, is deſpicably ſmall:
Their number, counting thoſe th' unaided eye
Can ſee, or by invented tubes deſcry,
With thoſe which in the adverſe hemiſphere,
Or near each pole to lands remote appear,
The wideſt ſtretch of human thought exceeds,
And in th' attentive mind amazement breeds:
While theſe ſo numerous, and ſo vaſt of ſize,
In various ways roll through the trackleſs ſkies;
Through croſſing roads perplext and intricate,
Perform their ſtages, and their rounds repeat;

None

None by colliſion from their courſe are driven,
No ſhocks, no conflicts, break the peace of heaven;
No ſhatter'd globes, no glowing fragments fall,
No worlds o'erturn'd cruſh this terreſtrial ball;
In beauteous order all the orbs advance,
And, in their mazy complicated dance,
Not in one part of all the pathleſs ſky
Did any ever halt, or ſtep awry.
When twice ten thouſand men depriv'd of ſight
To ſome wide vale direct their footſteps right;
Shall there a various figur'd dance eſſay,
Move by juſt ſteps, and meaſur'd time obey;
Shall croſs each other with unerring feet,
Never miſtake their place, and never meet;
Nor ſhall in many years the leaſt decline
From the ſame ground, and the ſame winding line:
Then may in various roads the orbs above,
Without a guide, in perfect concord move;
Then beauty, order, and harmonious laws,
May not require a wiſe Directing Cauſe.
See, how th' indulgent father of the day
At ſuch due diſtance does his beams diſplay,
That he his heat may give to ſea and land,
In juſt degrees, as all their wants demand!
But had he, in th' unmeaſurable ſpace
Of æther, choſen a remoter place;
For inſtance, pleas'd with that ſuperior ſeat
Where Saturn, or where Jove, their courſe repeat;
Or had he happen'd farther yet to lie
In the more diſtant quarters of the ſky;

How ſad, how wild, how exquiſite a ſcene
Of deſolation, had this planet been!
A waſteful, cold, untrodden wilderneſs,
The gloomy haunts of horror and diſtreſs:
Inſtead of woods, which crown the mountain's head,
And the gay honours of the verdant mead;
Inſtead of golden fruits, the garden's pride,
By genial ſhowers and ſolar heat ſupply'd;
Icelandian cold, and Hyperborean ſnows,
Eternal froſt, with ice that never flows,
Unſufferable winter, had defac'd
Earth's blooming charms, and made a barren waſte:
No mild indulgent gales would gently bear,
On their ſoft wings, ſweet vapours through the air,
The balmy ſpoils of plants, and fragrant flowers,
Of aromatic groves, and myrtle bowers,
Whoſe odoriferous exhalations fan
The flame of life, and recreate beaſt and man;
But ſtorms, ev'n worſe than vex Norwegian waves,
That breed in Scythia's hills, or Lapland caves,
Would through this bleak terreſtrial defart blow,
Glaze it with ice, or whelm it o'er with ſnow.
Or had the ſun, by like unhappy fate,
Elected to the earth a nearer ſeat,
His beams had cleft the hill, the valley dry'd,
Exhal'd the lake, and drain'd the briny tide:
A heat, ſuperior far to that which broils
Borneo, or Sumatra, Indian iſles;
Than that which ripens Guinea's golden ore,
Or burns the Libyan hind, or tans the Moor;

Had

Had laid all nature waſte, and turn'd the land
To hills of cinders, and to vales of ſand:
No beaſts could then have rang'd the leafleſs wood,
Nor finny nations cut the boiling flood;
Birds had not beat the airy road, the ſwains
No flocks had tended on the ruſſet plains.
Thus, had the ſun's bright orb been more remote,
The cold had kill'd; and, if more near, the drought.
Next ſee, Lucretian ſages, ſee the ſun
His courſe diurnal and his annual run.
How in his glorious race he moves along,
Gay as a bridegroom, as a giant ſtrong.
How his unvary'd labour he repeats,
Returns at morning, and at eve retreats;
And, by the diſtribution of his light,
Now gives to man the day, and now the night;
Night, when the drowſy ſwain and traveller ceaſe
Their daily toil, and ſooth their limbs with eaſe;
When all the weary ſons of woe reſtrain
Their yielding cares with ſlumber's ſilken chain,
Solace ſad grief, and lull reluctant pain.
And while the ſun, ne'er covetous of reſt,
Flies with ſuch rapid ſpeed from eaſt to weſt,
In tracks oblique he through the zodiac rolls,
Between the northern and the ſouthern poles:
From which revolving progreſs through the ſkies,
The needful ſeaſons of the year ariſe.
And as he now advances, now retreats,
Whence winter colds proceed, and ſummer heats,
He qualifies and cheers the air by turns,
Which winter freezes, and which ſummer burns.

Thus his kind rays the two extremes reduce,
And keep a temper fit for nature's uſe.
The froſt and drought, by this alternate power,
The earth's prolific energy reſtore.
The lives of man and beaſt demand the change;
Hence fowls the air, and fiſh the ocean, range.
Of heat and cold this juſt ſucceſſive reign,
Which does the balance of the year maintain,
The gardener's hope and farmer's patience props,
Gives vernal verdure, and autumnal crops.
Should but the ſun his duty once forget,
Nor from the north, nor from the ſouth, retreat;
Should not the beams revive, and ſooth the ſoil,
Mellow the furrow for the ploughman's toil;
A teeming vigour ſhould they not diffuſe,
Ferment the glebe, and genial ſpirits looſe,
Which lay impriſon'd in the ſtiffen'd ground,
Congeal'd with cold, in froſty fetters bound;
Unfruitful Earth her wretched fate would mourn,
No graſs would cloath the plains, no fruit the trees adorn.
But did the lingering orb much longer ſtay,
Unmindful of his courſe, and crooked way;
The earth, of dews defrauded, would deteſt
The fatal favour of th' effulgent gueſt;
To diſtant worlds implore him to repair,
And free from noxious beams the ſultry air:
His rays, productive now of wealth and joy,
Would then the paſture and the hills annoy,
And with too great indulgence would deſtroy:
In vain the labouring hind would till the land,
Turn up the glebe, and ſow his ſeed in ſand:

The

The meads would crack, in want of binding dews,
The channels would th' exhaling river loſe:
While in their haunts wild beaſts expiring lie,
The panting herds would on the paſture die.
But now the ſun at neither tropick ſtays
A longer time than his alternate rays
In ſuch proportion heat and luſtre give,
As do not ruin nature, but revive.
When the bright orb, to ſolace Southern ſeats,
Inverts his courſe, and from the North retreats;
As he advances, his indulgent beam
Makes the glad earth with freſh conceptions teem;
Reſtores their leafy honours to the woods,
Flowers to the banks, and freedom to the floods;
Unbinds the turf, exhilarates the plain,
Brings back his labour, and recruits the ſwain;
Through all the ſoil a genial ferment ſpreads,
Regenerates the plants, and new adorns the meads.
The birds on branches perch'd, or on the wing,
At nature's verdant reſtoration ſing,
And with melodious lay ſalute the ſpring.
The heats of ſummer benefits produce
Of equal number, and of equal uſe:
The ſprouting births, and beauteous vernal bloom,
By warmer rays to ripe perfection come;
Th' auſtere and ponderous juices they ſublime,
Make them aſcend the porous ſoil, and climb
The orange-tree, the citron, and the lime;
Which, drunk in plenty by the thirſty root,
Break forth in painted flowers, and golden fruit:

They

They explicate the leaves, and ripen food
For the ſilk-labourers of the mulberry wood;
And the ſweet liquor on the cane beſtow,
From which prepar'd the luſcious ſugars flow;
With generous juice enrich the ſpreading vine,
And in the grape digeſt the ſprightly wine.
The fragrant trees, which grow by Indian floods,
And in Arabia's aromatic woods,
Owe all their ſpices to the ſummer's heat,
Their gummy tears, and odoriferous ſweat.
Now the bright ſun compacts the precious ſtone,
Imparting radiant luſtre, like his own:
He tinctures rubies with their roſy hue,
And on the ſapphire ſpreads a heavenly blue;
For the proud monarch's dazzling crown prepares
Rich orient pearl, and adamantine ſtars.
Next autumn, when the ſun's withdrawing ray
The night enlarges, and contracts the day,
To crown his labour, to the farmer yields
The yellow treaſures of his fruitful fields;
Ripens the harveſt for the crooked ſteel
(While bending ſtalks the rural weapon feel);
The fragrant fruit for the nice palate fits,
And to the preſs the ſwelling grape ſubmits.
At length, forſaken by the ſolar rays,
See, drooping Nature ſickens and decays;
While Winter all his ſnowy ſtores diſplays,
In hoary triumph unmoleſted reigns
O'er barren hills, and bleak untrodden plains;
Hardens the glebe, the ſhady grove deforms,
Fetters the floods, and ſhakes the air with ſtorms.

Now

Now active ſpirits are reſtrain'd with cold,
And priſons, cramp'd with ice, the genial captives hold.
The meads their flowery pride no longer wear,
And trees extend their naked arms in air;
The frozen furrow, and the fallow field,
Nor to the ſpade, nor to the harrow, yield.
  Yet in their turn the ſnows and froſts produce
Various effects, and of important uſe.
Th' intemperate heats of ſummer are control'd
By winter's rigour, and inclement cold,
Which checks contagious ſpawn, and noxious ſteams,
The fatal offspring of immoderate beams;
Th' exhauſted air with vital nitre fills,
Infection ſtops, and deaths in embryo kills;
Conſtrains the glebe, keeps back the hurtful weed,
And fits the furrow for the vernal ſeed.
The ſpirits now, as ſaid, impriſon'd ſtay,
Which elſe, by warmer ſun-beams drawn away,
Would roam in air, and diſſipated ſtray.
Thus are the winter froſts to nature kind,
Froſts, which reduce exceſſive heats, and bind
Prolific ferments in reſiſtleſs chains,
Whence parent earth her fruitfulneſs maintains.
To compaſs all theſe happy ends, the ſun
In winding tracts does through the zodiac run.
  You, who ſo much are vers'd in cauſes, tell,
What from the tropicks can the ſun repel?
What vigorous arm, what repercuſſive blow,
Bandies the mighty globe ſtill to and fro,
Yet with ſuch conduct, ſuch unerring art,
He never did the trackleſs road deſert?

Why does he never in his ſpiral race
The tropicks or the polar circles paſs?
What gulphs, what mounds, what terrours, can controul
The ruſhing orb, and make him backward roll?
Why ſhould he halt at either ſtation? why
Not forward run in unobſtructive ſky?
Can he not paſs an aſtronomic line?
Or does he dread th' imaginary ſign;
That he ſhould ne'er advance to either pole,
Nor farther yet in liquid æther roll,
Till he has gain'd ſome unfrequented place,
Loſt to the world in vaſt unmeaſur'd ſpace?
If to the old you the new ſchools prefer,
And to the fam'd Copernicus adhere;
If you eſteem that ſuppoſition beſt,
Which moves the earth, and leaves the ſun at reſt;
With a new veil your ignorance you hide,
Still is the knot as hard to be unty'd;
You change your ſcheme, but the old doubts remain,
And ſtill you leave th' enquiring mind in pain.
This problem, as philoſophers, reſolve:
What makes the globe from Weſt to Eaſt revolve?
What is the ſtrong impulſive cauſe declare,
Which rolls the ponderous orb ſo ſwift in air?
To your vain anſwer will you have recourſe,
And tell us 'tis ingenite, active force,
Mobility, or native power to move,
Words which mean nothing, and can nothing prove?
That moving power, that force innate explain,
Or your grave anſwers are abſurd and vain:

We

We no ſolution of our queſtion find;
Your words bewilder, not direct the mind.
If you, this rapid motion to procure,
For the hard taſk employ magnetic power,
Whether that power you at the centre place,
Or in the middle regions of the maſs,
Or elſe, as ſome philoſophers aſſert,
You give an equal ſhare to every part,
Have you by this the cauſe of motion ſhown?
After explaining, is it not unknown?
Since you pretend, by reaſon's ſtricteſt laws,
Of an effect to manifeſt the cauſe;
Nature, of wonders ſo immenſe a field,
Can none more ſtrange, none more myſterious yield,
None that eludes ſagacious reaſon more
Than this obſcure, inexplicable power.
Since you the ſpring of motion cannot ſhow,
Be juſt, and faultleſs ignorance allow;
Say, 'tis obedience to th' Almighty nod,
That 'tis the will, the power, the hand of God.
Philoſophers of ſpreading fame are found,
Who by th' attraction of the orbs around
Would move the earth, and make its courſe obey
The ſun's and moon's inevitable ſway.
Some from the preſſure and impelling force
Of heavenly bodies would derive its courſe;
Whilſt in the dark and difficult diſpute
All are by turns confuted, and confute;
Each can ſubvert th' opponent's ſcheme, but none
Has ſtrength of reaſon to ſupport his own.

The mind employ'd in ſearch of ſecret things,
To find out motion's cauſe and hidden ſprings,
Through all th' etherial regions mounts on high,
Views all the ſpheres, and ranges all the ſky;
Searches the orbs, and penetrates the air
With unſucceſsful toil, and fruitleſs care;
Till, ſtopp'd by awful heights, and gulphs immenſe
Of Wiſdom, and of vaſt Omnipotence,
She trembling ſtands, and does in wonder gaze,
Loſt in the wide inextricable maze.

See, how the ſun does on the middle ſhine,
And round the globe deſcribe th' æquator line;
By which wiſe means he can the whole ſurvey
With a direct, or with a ſlanting ray,
In the ſucceſſion of a night and day.
Had the North pole been fixt beneath the ſun,
To Southern realms the day had been unknown:
If the South pole had gain'd that nearer ſeat,
The Northern climes had met as hard a fate.
And ſince the ſpace, that lies on either ſide
The ſolar orb, is without limits wide;
Grant that the ſun had happen'd to prefer
A ſeat aſcant but one diameter,
Loſt to the light by that unhappy place
This globe had lain a frozen, loneſome maſs.

Behold the light emitted from the ſun,
What more familiar, and what more unknown!
While by its ſpreading radiance it reveals
All nature's face, it ſtill itſelf conceals.
See how each morn it does its beams diſplay,
And on its golden wings bring back the day!

How

How ſoon th' effulgent emanations fly
Through the blue gulph of interpoſing ſky!
How ſoon their luſtre all the region fills,
Smiles on the vallies, and adorns the hills!
Millions of miles, ſo rapid is their race,
To cheer the earth, they in few moments paſs.
Amazing progreſs! At its utmoſt ſtretch,
What human mind can this ſwift motion reach?
But if, to ſave ſo quick a flight, you ſay
The ever-rolling orb's impulſive ray
On the next threads and filaments does bear
Which form the ſpringy texture of the air,
That thoſe ſtill ſtrike the next, till to the ſight
The quick vibration propagates the light;
'Tis ſtill as hard, if we this ſcheme believe,
The cauſe of light's ſwift progreſs to conceive.
With thought from prepoſſeſſion free, reflect
On ſolar rays, as they the ſight reſpect.
The beams of light had been in vain diſplay'd,
Had not the eye been fit for viſion made:
In vain the Author had the eye prepar'd
With ſo much ſkill, had not the light appear'd.
The old and new aſtronomers in vain
Attempt the heavenly motions to explain.
Firſt Ptolomy his ſcheme celeſtial wrought,
And of machines a wild proviſion brought:
Orbs centric and eccentric he prepares,
Cycles and epicycles, ſolid ſpheres,
In order plac'd, and with bright globes inlaid,
To ſolve the tours by heavenly bodies made.

But ſo perplext, ſo intricate a frame,
The latter ages with deriſion name.
The comets, which at ſeaſons downward tend,
Then with their flaming equipage aſcend;
Venus, which in the purlieus of the ſun
Does now above him, now beneath him, run;
The ancient ſtructure of the heavens ſubvert,
Rear'd with vaſt labour, but with little art.
Copernicus, who rightly did condemn
This eldeſt ſyſtem, form'd a wiſer ſcheme;
In which he leaves the ſun at reſt, and rolls
The orb terreſtrial on its proper poles;
Which makes the night and day by this career,
And by its ſlow and crooked courſe the year.
The famous Dane, who oft' the modern guides,
To earth and ſun their provinces divides:
The earth's rotation makes the night and day;
The ſun revolving through th' ecliptic way
Effects the various ſeaſons of the year,
Which in their turn for happy ends appear.
This ſcheme or that, which pleaſes beſt, embrace,
Still we the Fountain of their motion trace.
Kepler aſſerts theſe wonders may be done
By the magnetic virtue of the ſun,
Which he, to gain his end, thinks fit to place
Full in the centre of that mighty ſpace,
Which does the ſpheres, where planets roll, include,
And leaves him with attractive force endued.
The ſun, thus ſeated, by mechanic laws,
The earth and every diſtant planet draws;

By which attraction all the planets, found
Within his reach, are turn'd in æther round.
If all theſe rolling orbs the ſun obey,
Who holds his empire by magnetic ſway;
Since all are guided with an equal force,
Why are they ſo unequal in their courſe?
Saturn in thirty years his ring compleats,
Which ſwifter Jupiter in twelve repeats.
Mars three and twenty months revolving ſpends;
The Earth in twelve her annual journey ends.
Venus, thy race in twice four months is run;
For his, Mercurius three demands; the Moon
Her revolution finiſhes in one.
If all at once are mov'd, and by one ſpring;
Why ſo unequal is their annual ring?
If ſome, you ſay, preſt with a ponderous load
Of gravity, move ſlower in their road,
Becauſe, with weight encumber'd and oppreſt,
Theſe ſluggiſh orbs th' attractive ſun reſiſt;
Till you can weight and gravity explain,
Thoſe words are inſignificant and vain.
If planetary orbs the Sun obey,
Why ſhould the Moon diſown his ſovereign ſway?
Why in a whirling eddy of her own
Around the globe terreſtrial ſhould ſhe run?
This diſobedience of the Moon will prove
The Sun's bright orb does not the planet move.
Philoſophers may ſpare their toil; in vain
They form new ſchemes, and rack their thoughtful brain,
The cauſe of heavenly motions to explain:

After their various unſucceſsful ways,
Their fruitleſs labour, and inept eſſays,
No cauſe of thoſe appearances they 'll find,
But Power exerted by th' Eternal Mind;
Which through their roads the orbs celeſtial drives,
And this or that determin'd motion gives.
The Mind Supreme does all his worlds control,
Which by his order this and that way roll;
From him they take a delegated force,
And by his high command maintain their courſe;
By laws decreed ere fleeting time begun,
In their fixt limits they their ſtages run.
But if the Earth, and each erratic world,
Around their Sun their proper centre whirl'd,
Compoſe but one extended vaſt machine,
And from one ſpring their motions all begin;
Does not ſo wide, ſo intricate a frame,
Yet ſo harmonious, ſovereign art proclaim?
Is it a proof of judgment to invent
A work of ſpheres involv'd, which repreſent
The ſituation of the orbs above,
Their ſize and number ſhew, and how they move?
And does not in the orbs themſelves appear
A great contrivance, and deſign as clear?
This wide machine the univerſe regard,
With how much ſkill is each apartment rear'd!
The Sun, a globe of fire, a glowing maſs,
Hotter than melting flint, or fluid glaſs,
Of this our ſyſtem holds the middle place.
Mercurius, neareſt to the central Sun,
Does in an oval orbit circling run;

But

But rarely is the object of our ſight
In ſolar glory ſunk, and more prevailing light.
Venus the next, whoſe lovely beams adorn
As well the dewy eve, as opening morn,
Does her fair orb in beauteous order turn.
The Globe Terreſtrial next, with ſlanting poles,
And all its ponderous load, unwearied rolls.
Then we behold bright planetary Jove
Sublime in air through his wide province move;
Four ſecond planets his dominion own,
And round him turn, as round the Earth the Moon.
Saturn, revolving in the higheſt ſphere,
With lingering labour finiſhes his year.

Yet is this mighty ſyſtem, which contains
So many worlds, ſuch vaſt etherial plains,
But one of thouſands, which compoſe the whole,
Perhaps as glorious, and of worlds as full.
The ſtars, which grace the high expanſion, bright
By their own beams, and unprecarious light,
Though ſome near neighbours ſeem, and ſome diſplay
United luſtre in the milky way,
At a vaſt diſtance from each other lie,
Sever'd by ſpacious voids of liquid ſky.
All theſe illuſtrious worlds, and many more,
Which by the tube aſtronomers explore;
And millions which the glaſs can ne'er deſcry,
Loſt in the wilds of vaſt immenſity;
Are ſuns, are centres, whoſe ſuperior ſway
Planets of various magnitude obey.

If we with one clear comprehenſive ſight
Saw all theſe ſyſtems, all theſe orbs of light;

If we their order and dependence knew,
Had all their motions and their ends in view,
With all the comets which in æther ſtray,
Yet conſtant to their time, and to their way;
Which planets ſeem, though rarely they appear,
Rarely approach the radiant ſun ſo near,
That his fair beams their atmoſphere pervade,
Whence their bright hair and flaming trains are made;
Would not this view convincing marks impart
Of perfect prudence and ſtupendous art?
The maſters form'd in Newton's famous ſchool,
Who does the chief in modern ſcience rule,
Erect their ſchemes by mathematic laws,
And ſolve appearances with juſt applauſe:
Theſe, who have Nature's ſteps with care purſued,
That matter is with active force endued,
That all its parts magnetic power exert,
And to each other gravitate, aſſert.
While by this power they on each other act,
They are at once attracted, and attract.
Leſs bulky matter therefore muſt obey
More bulky matter's more engaging ſway;
By this the fabrick they together hold,
By this the courſe of heavenly orbs unfold.
Yet theſe ſagacious ſons of ſcience own
Attractive virtue is a thing unknown.
This wondrous power, they piouſly aſſert,
Th' Almighty Author did at firſt impart
To matter in degrees, that might produce
The motions he deſign'd for Nature's uſe.

But

But, leſt we ſhould not here due reverence pay
To learned Epicurus, ſee the way
By which this reaſoner, of ſuch high renown,
Moves through th' ecliptic road the rolling ſun.
Oppreſt with thirſt and heat, to adverſe ſeats
By turns, ſays he, the panting ſun retreats
To ſlake his drought, his vigour to repair
In ſnowy climes, and frozen fields of air;
Where the bright glutton revels without reſt
On his cool banquet, and aërial feaſt;
Still to and fro he does his light convey
Through the ſame track, the ſame unalter'd way,
On luxury intent, and eager of his prey.
But if the ſun is back and forward roll'd,
To treat his thirſty orb with polar cold,
Say, is it not, good Epicurus, ſtrange
He ſhould not once beyond the tropic range,
Where he, to quench his drought ſo much inclin'd,
May ſnowy fields, and nitrous paſtures find,
Meet ſtores of cold ſo greedily purſu'd,
And be refreſh'd with never-waſting food?
Sometimes this wondrous man is pleas'd to ſay,
This way and that ſtrong blaſts the ſun convey:
A northern wind his orb with vigour drives,
Till at the ſouthern tropic it arrives;
Then, wanting breath, and with his toil oppreſt,
He drops his wings, and leaves the air at reſt;
Freſh guſts, now ſpringing from the ſouthern pole,
Aſſault him there, and make him backward roll.
Thus gales alternate through the zodiack blow
The ſailing orb, and waft him to and fro;

While Epicurus, bleſt with thought refin'd,
Makes the vaſt globe the paſtime of the wind.
Were it not idle labour to confute
Notions ſo wild, unworthy of diſpute;
I 'd of the learned Epicurus aſk,
If this were for the winds a proper taſk?
Illuſtrious ſage, inform th' enquirer, why
Still from one ſtated point of all the ſky
The fickle meteor ſhould the ſun convey,
Through the ſame ſtages of his ſpiral way?
Why in one path, why with ſuch equal pace,
That he ſhould never miſs in all his race,
Of time one minute, or one inch of ſpace?
Remark the air's tranſparent element,
Its curious ſtructure, and its vaſt extent:
Its wondrous web proclaims the loom divine;
Its threads, the hand that drew them out ſo fine.
This thin contexture makes its boſom fit,
Celeſtial heat and luſtre to tranſmit;
By which of foreign orbs the riches flow
On this dependent, needy ball below.
Obſerve its parts link'd in ſuch artful ſort,
All are at once ſupported, and ſupport:
The column pois'd ſits hovering on our heads,
And a ſoft burden on our ſhoulders ſpreads;
So the ſide-arches all the weight ſuſtain,
We find no preſſure, and we feel no pain;
Still are the ſubtile ſtrings in tenſion found,
Like thoſe of lutes to juſt proportion wound,
Which of the air's vibration is the ſource,
When it receives the ſtrokes of foreign force.

Let

Let curious minds, who would the air inſpect,
On its elaſtic energy reflect.
The ſecret force through all the frame diffus'd,
By which its ſtrings are from compreſſion loos'd;
The ſpungy parts, now to a ſtraiter ſeat
Are forc'd by cold, and widen'd now by heat;
By turns they all extend, by turns retire,
As Nature's various ſervices require;
They now expand to fill an empty ſpace,
Now ſhrink to let a ponderous body paſs.
If raging winds invade the atmoſphere,
Their force its curious texture cannot tear,
Make no diſruption in the threads of air;
Or if it does, thoſe parts themſelves reſtore,
Heal their own wounds, and their own breaches cure.
Hence the melodious tenants of the ſky,
Which haunt inferior ſeats, or ſoar on high,
With eaſe through all the fluid region ſtray,
And through the wide expanſion wing their way;
Whoſe open meſhes let terreſtrial ſteams
Paſs through, entic'd away by ſolar beams;
And thus a road reciprocal diſplay
To riſing vapours, and deſcending day.
Of heat and light, what ever-during ſtores,
Brought from the ſun's exhauſtleſs golden ſhores;
Through gulphs immenſe of intervening air,
Enrich the earth, and every loſs repair!
The land, its gainful traffick to maintain,
Sends out crude vapours, in exchange for rain;

The flowery garden and the verdant mead,
Warm'd by their rays, their exhalations ſpread,
In ſhowers and balmy dews to be repaid;
The ſtreams, their banks forſaken, upward move,
And flow again in wandering clouds above:
Theſe regions Nature's magazines on high
With all the ſtores demanded there ſupply;
Their different ſteams the air's wide boſom fill,
Moiſt from the flood, dry from the barren hill;
Materials into meteors to be wrought,
Which back to theſe terreſtrial ſeats are brought,
By Nature ſhap'd to various figures, thoſe
The fruitful rain, and theſe the hail compoſe,
The ſnowy fleece, and curious froſt-work; theſe
Produce the dew, and thoſe the gentle breeze:
Some form fierce winds, which o'er the mountain paſs,
And beat with vigorous wings the valley's face;
O'er the wide lake and barren deſart blow,
O'er Libya's burning ſand, and Scythia's ſnow;
Shake the high cedar, through the foreſt ſweep,
And with their furious breath ferment the deep.
This thin, this ſoft contexture of the air
Shows the wiſe Author's providential care,
Who did the wondrous ſtructure ſo contrive,
That it might life to breathing creatures give;
Might reinſpire, and make the circling maſs
Through all its winding channels fit to paſs.
Had not the Maker wrought the ſpringy frame
Such as it is, to fan the vital flame,
The blood, defrauded of its nitrous food,
Had cool'd and languiſh'd in th' arterial road:

While

While the tir'd heart had ſtrove with fruitleſs pain
To puſh the lazy tide along the vein.
Of what important uſe to human kind,
To what great ends ſubſervient, is the wind?
Behold, where-e'er this active vapour flies,
It drives the clouds, and agitates the ſkies:
This from ſtagnation and corruption ſaves
Th' aërial ocean's ever-rolling waves.
This animals, to ſuccour life, demand;
For, ſhould the air unventilated ſtand,
The idle deep corrupted would contain
Blue deaths, and ſecret ſtores of raging pain;
The ſcorching ſun would with a fatal beam
Make all the void with births malignant team,
Engender jaundice, ſpotted torments breed,
And purple plagues, from peſtilential ſeed;
Exhaling vapours would be turn'd to ſwarms
Of noxious inſects, and deſtructive worms,
More than were rais'd to ſcourge tyrannic luſt,
By Moſes' rod, from animated duſt.
Another bleſſing, which the breathing wind
Benevolent conveys to human kind,
Is, that it cools and qualifies the air,
And with ſoft breezes does the regions cheer,
On which the ſun o'er-friendly does diſplay
Heat too prevailing, and redundant day.
Ye ſwarthy nations of the torrid zone,
How well to you is this great bounty known!
As frequent gales from the wide ocean riſe
To fan your air, and moderate your ſkies;

So conſtant winds, as well as rivers, flow
From your high hills enrich'd with ſtores of ſnow;
For this great end, theſe hills riſe more ſublime,
Than thoſe erected in a temperate clime.
Had not the Author his proviſion made,
By which your air is cool'd, your ſun allay'd,
Deſtroy'd by too intenſe a flame, the land
Had lain a parch'd inhoſpitable ſand.
Theſe diſtricts, which between the tropicks lie,
Which ſcorching beams directly darted fry,
Were thought an uninhabitable ſeat,
Burnt by the neighbouring orb's immoderate heat:
But the freſh breeze, that from the ocean blows,
From the wide lake, or from the mountain ſnows,
So ſooths the air, and mitigates the ſun,
So cures the regions of the ſultry zone,
That oft' with Nature's bleſſings they abound,
Frequent in people, and with plenty crown'd.
As active winds relieve the air and land,
The ſeas no leſs their uſeful blaſts demand:
Without this aid, the ſhip would ne'er advance
Along the deep, and o'er the billow dance,
But lie a lazy and a uſeleſs load,
The foreſt's waſted ſpoils, the lumber of the flood.
Let but the wind with an auſpicious gale,
To ſhove the veſſel, fill the ſpreading ſail,
And ſee, with ſwelling canvaſs wing'd, ſhe flies,
And with her waving ſtreamers ſweeps the ſkies!
Th' adventurous merchant thus purſues his way
Or to the riſe, or to the fall of day.

Thus

Thus mutual traffick ſever'd realms maintain,
And manufactures change to mutual gain;
Each other's growth and arts they ſell and buy,
Eaſe their redundance, and their wants ſupply.
Ye Britons, who the fruit of commerce find,
How is your Iſle a debtor to the wind,
Which thither wafts Arabia's fragrant ſpoils,
Gems, pearls, and ſpices, from the Indian iſles,
From Perſia ſilks, wines from Iberia's ſhore,
Peruvian drugs, and Guinea's golden ore!
Delights and wealth to fair Auguſta flow
From every region whence the winds can blow.
See, how the vapours congregated rear
Their gloomy columns, and obſcure the air!
Forgetful of their gravity, they riſe,
Renounce the centre, and uſurp the ſkies,
Where, form'd to clouds, they their black lines diſplay,
And take their airy march, as winds convey.
Sublime in air while they their courſe purſue,
They from their ſable fleeces ſhake the dew
On the parcht mountain, and with genial rain
Renew the foreſt, and refreſh the plain:
They ſhed their healing juices on the ground,
Cement the crack, and cloſe the gaping wound.
Did not the vapours, by the ſolar heat
Thinn'd and exhal'd, riſe to their airy ſeat,
Or not in watery clouds collected fly,
Then form'd to ponderous drops deſert the ſky;
The fields would no recruits of moiſture find,
But, by the ſun-beams dry'd, and by the wind,

Would

Would never plant, or flower, or fruit, produce,
Or for the beaſt, or for his maſter's uſe.
But in the ſpacious climates, which the rain
Does never bleſs (ſuch is th' Egyptian plain),
With how much art is that defect ſupply'd!
See, how ſome noble river's ſwelling tide,
Augmented by the mountain's melting ſnows,
Breaks from its banks, and o'er the region flows!
Hence fruitful crops and flowery wealth enſue,
And to the ſwain ſuch mighty gains accrue,
He ne'er reproaches heaven for want of dew.
See, and revere, th' artillery of Heaven,
Drawn by the gale, or by the tempeſt driven!
A dreadful fire the floating batteries make,
O'erturn the mountain, and the foreſt ſhake.
This way and that they drive the atmoſphere,
And its wide boſom from corruption clear,
While their bright flame conſumes the ſulphur trains,
And noxious vapours which infect our veins.
Thus they refine the vital element,
Secure our health, and growing plagues prevent.
Your contemplation farther yet purſue;
The wondrous world of vegetables view!
Obſerve the foreſt oak, the mountain pine,
The towering cedar, and the humble vine,
The bending willow, that o'erſhades the flood,
And each ſpontaneous offspring of the wood!
The oak and pine, which high from earth ariſe,
And wave their lofty heads amidſt the ſkies,
Their parent earth in like proportion wound,
And through crude metals penetrate the ground;

Their

Their ſtrong and ample roots deſcend ſo deep,
That fixt and firm they may their ſtation keep,
And the fierce ſhocks of furious winds defy,
With all the outrage of inclement ſky.
But the baſe brier and the noble vine
Their arms around their ſtronger neighbour twine.
The creeping ivy, to prevent its fall,
Clings with its fibrous grapples to the wall.
Thus are the trees of every kind ſecure,
Or by their own, or by a borrow'd power.
But every tree from all its branching roots
Amidſt the glebe ſmall hollow fibres ſhoots;
Which drink with thirſty mouths the vital juice,
And to the limbs and leaves their food diffuſe:
Peculiar pores peculiar juice receive,
To this deny, to that admittance give.
Hence various trees their various fruits produce
Some for delightful taſte, and ſome for uſe.
Hence ſprouting plants enrich the plain and wood,
For phyſick ſome, and ſome deſign'd for food.
Hence fragrant flowers, with different colours dy'd,
On ſmiling meads unfold their gaudy pride.
Review theſe numerous ſcenes, at once ſurvey
Nature's extended face; then, ſcepticks, ſay,
In this wide field of wonders can you find
No art diſcover'd, and no end deſign'd?

CREATION.

BOOK III.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE introduction. Uſeful knowledge firſt purſued by man Agriculture. Architecture. Sculpture. Painting. Muſick. The Grecian Philoſophers firſt engaged in uſeleſs ſpeculations. The abſurdity of aſſerting the ſelf-exiſtent, independent, and eternal being of atoms, according to the ſcheme of Epicurus. Anſwer to the objections of Atheiſts to the ſcheme of Creation aſſerted in the two former books. The objections brought by Lucretius againſt Creation, from the neceſſity of pre-exiſtent matter for the formation of all kinds of beings; from the pretended unartful contrivance of the world; from thorns, briers, and noxious weeds; from ſavage beaſts, ſtorms, thunder, diſeaſes; from the painful birth and the ſhort life of man; from the inequality of heat and cold in different climates; anſwered. The objections of the Pyrrhonians, or Scepticks, anſwered. A reply to thoſe who aſſert all things owe their being and their motions to nature. Their different and ſenſeleſs account of that word. More apparent and eminent ſkill and wiſdom expreſſed in the works of nature than in thoſe of human art. The unreaſonableneſs of denying ſkill and deſign in the Author of thoſe works. Vaninus, Hobbes, and Spinoſa, conſidered.

ERE vain Philoſophy had rear'd her ſchool,
Whoſe chiefs imagin'd realms of ſcience rule,
With idle toil form viſionary ſchemes,
And wage eternal war for rival dreams;
Studious of good, man diſregarded fame,
And uſeful knowledge was his eldeſt aim:
Through metaphyſic wilds he never flew,
Nor the dark haunts of ſchool chimæras knew,
But had alone his happineſs in view.
He milk'd the lowing herd, he preſs'd the cheeſe,
Folded the flock, and ſpun the woolly fleece.
In urns the bees delicious dews he lay'd,
Whoſe kindling wax invented day diſplay'd;
Wreſted their iron entrails from the hills,
Then with the ſpoils his glowing forges fills;
And ſhap'd with vigorous ſtrokes the ruddy bar
To rural arms, unconſcious yet of war.
He made the ploughſhare in the furrow ſhine,
And learn'd to ſow his bread, and plant his vine.
Now verdant food adorn'd the garden beds,
And fruitful trees ſhot up their branching heads;
Rich balm from groves, and herbs from graſſy plains,
His fever ſooth'd, or heal'd his wounded veins.
Our fathers next, in architecture ſkill'd,
Cities for uſe, and forts for ſafety, build:
Then palaces and lofty domes aroſe,
Theſe for devotion, and for pleaſure thoſe.
Their thoughts were next to artful ſculpture turn'd,
Which now the palace, now the dome adorn'd.

The pencil then did growing fame acquire,
Then was the trumpet heard, and tuneful lyre,
One did the triumph ſing, and one the war inſpire.
Greece did at length a learned race produce,
Who needful ſcience mock'd, and arts of uſe,
Conſum'd their fruitleſs hours in eager chace
Of airy notions, through the boundleſs ſpace
Of ſpeculation, and the darkſome void,
Where wrangling wits, in endleſs ſtrife employ'd,
Mankind with idle ſubtilties embroil,
And faſhion ſyſtems with romantic toil;
Theſe with the pride of dogmatizing ſchools
Impos'd on nature arbitrary rules;
Forc'd her their vain inventions to obey,
And move as learned frenzy trac'd the way:
Above the clouds while they preſum'd to ſoar,
Her trackleſs heights ambitious to explore,
And heaps of undigeſted volumes writ,
Illuſive notions of fantaſtic wit;
So long they nature ſearch'd, and mark'd her laws,
They loſt the knowledge of th' Almighty Cauſe.
Th' erroneous dictates of each Grecian ſage
Renounc'd the doctrines of the eldeſt age:
Yet theſe their matchleſs ſcience did proclaim,
Uſurp diſtinction, and appropriate fame.
But though their ſchools produc'd no nobler fruit
Than empty ſchemes, and triumphs of diſpute;
The notions which ariſe from Nature's light
As well adorn the mind, as guide her right,
Enlarge her compaſs, and improve her ſight.

Theſe

Theſe ne'er the breaſt with vain ambition fire,
But baniſh pride, and modeſt thoughts inſpire.
By her inform'd, we bleſt religion learn,
Its glorious object by her aid diſcern;
The rolling worlds around us we ſurvey,
Th' alternate ſovereigns of the night and day;
View the wide earth adorn'd with hills and woods,
Rich in her herds, and fertile by her floods;
Walk through the deep apartments of the main,
Aſcend the air to viſit clouds and rain;
And, while we raviſh'd gaze on Nature's face,
Remark her order, and her motions trace.
The long coherent chain of things we find
Leads to a Cauſe Supreme, a wiſe Creating Mind.
You, who the being of a God diſclaim,
And think mere Chance produc'd this wondrous frame;
Say, did you e'er reflect, Lucretian tribe,
To matter what perfections you aſcribe?
Can you to duſt ſuch veneration ſhow?
An atom with ſuch privilege endow,
That from its nature's pure neceſſity
It ſhould exiſt, and no corruption ſee?
Since your firſt atoms independent are,
And not each other's being prop and bear,
And ſince to this it is fortuitous
That others ſhould exiſtence have; ſuppoſe
You in your mind one atom ſhould remove
From all the troops, that in the vacant ſtrove,
Cannot our thought conceive one atom leſs?
If ſo, you Grecian ſages muſt confeſs

That matter, which you independent name,
Cannot a being neceſſary claim;
For what has being from neceſſity,
It is impoſſible it ſhould not be.
Why has an atom this one place poſſeſt
Of all the empty void, and not the reſt?
If by its nature's force 'tis preſent here,
By the ſame force it muſt be every where;
Can beings be confin'd, which neceſſary are?
If a firſt body may to any place
Be not determin'd, in the boundleſs ſpace,
'Tis plain, it then may abſent be from all;
Who then will this a ſelf-exiſtence call?
As time does vaſt eternity regard,
So place is with infinitude compar'd:
A being then, which never did commence,
Muſt, as eternal, likewiſe be immenſe.
What cauſe within, or what without, is found,
That can a being uncreated bound?
None that 's internal, for it has no cauſe;
Nor can it be control'd by foreign laws,
For then it clearly would dependent be
On force ſuperior, which will ne'er agree
With ſelf-exiſtence and neceſſity.
Abſurdly then to atoms you aſſign
Such powers, and ſuch prerogatives divine.
Thus while the notion of a God you flight,
Yourſelves (who vainly think you reaſon right)
Make vile material Gods, in number infinite.
Now let us, as 'tis juſt, in turn prepare
To ſtand the foe, and wage defenſive war.

Lucretius firſt, a mighty hero, ſprings
Into the field, and his own triumph ſings.
He brings, to make us from our ground retire,
The reaſoner's weapons, and the poet's fire.
The tuneful ſophiſt thus his battle forms,
Our bulwarks thus in poliſh'd armour ſtorms:
To parent matter things their being owe,
Becauſe from nothing no productions flow;
And, if we grant no pre-exiſtent ſeed,
Things, different things, from what they do, might breed,
And any thing from any thing proceed;
The ſpicy groves might Scythia's hills adorn,
The thiſtle might the amaranth have borne,
The vine the lemon, and the grape the thorn;
Herds from the hills, men from the ſeas might riſe,
From woods the whales, and lions from the ſkies.
Th' elated bard here, with a conqueror's air,
Diſdainful ſmiles, and bids his foes deſpair.
But, Carus, here you uſe poetic charms,
And not aſſail us with the reaſoner's arms.
Where all is clear, you fancy'd doubts remove,
And what we grant with eaſe, with labour prove.
What you would prove, but cannot, you decline;
But chuſe a thing you can, and there you ſhine.
Tell us, fam'd Roman, was it e'er denied,
That ſeeds for ſuch productions are ſupplied?
That Nature always muſt materials find
For beaſts and trees, to propagate their kind?
All generation, the rude peaſant knows,
A pre-exiſtent matter muſt ſuppoſe.

But what to Nature firſt her being gave?
Tell, whence your atoms their exiſtence have?
We aſk you, whence the ſeeds conſtituent ſpring
Of every plant, and every living thing?
Whence every creature ſhould produce its kind,
And to its proper ſpecies be confin'd?
To anſwer this, Lucretius, will require
More than ſweet numbers and poetic fire.
But ſee how well the Poet will ſupport
His cauſe, if we the argument retort.
If Chance alone could manage, ſort, divide,
And, beings to produce, your atoms guide;
If caſual concourſe did the world compoſe,
And things from hits fortuitous aroſe;
Then any thing might come from any thing;
For how from chance can conſtant order ſpring?
The foreſt oak might bear the bluſhing roſe,
And fragrant myrtles thrive in Ruſſian ſnows;
The fair pomegranate might adorn the pine,
The grape the bramble, and the ſloe the vine;
Fiſh from the plains, birds from the floods might riſe,
And lowing herds break from the ſtarry ſkies.
But, ſee, the chief does keener weapons chuſe,
Advances bold, and thus the fight renews:
"If I were doubtful of the ſource and ſpring
"Whence things ariſe, I from the ſkies could bring,
"And every part of Nature, proofs, to ſhow
"The world to Gods cannot its being owe;
"So full of faults is all th' unartful frame:
"Firſt we the air's unpeopled deſert blame.

"Brute

" Brute beasts possess the hill, and shady wood;
" Much do the lakes, but more the ocean's flood
" (Which severs realms, and shores divided leaves),
" Take from the land by interposing waves;
" One third, by freezing cold and burning heat,
" Lies a deform'd, inhospitable seat;
" The rest, unlabour'd, would by nature breed
" Wild brambles only, and the noxious weed,
" Did not industrious man, with endless toil,
" Extort his food from the reluctant soil;
" Did not the farmer's steel the furrow wound,
" And harrows tear the harvest from the ground,
" The earth would no spontaneous fruits afford
" To man, her vain imaginary Lord.
" Oft', when the labouring hind has plough'd the field;
" And forc'd the glebe unwillingly to yield,
" When green and flowery Nature crowns his hope
" With the gay promise of a plenteous crop,
" The fruits (sad ruin!) perish on the ground;
" Burnt by the Sun, or by the deluge drown'd;
" Or soon decay, by snows immoderate chill'd,
" By winds are blasted, or by lightning kill'd.
" Nature, besides, the savage beast sustains,
" Breeds in the hills the terror of the plains,
" To man a fatal race. Could this be so,
" Did gracious Gods dispose of things below?
" Their proper plagues with annual seasons come,
" And deaths untimely blast us in the bloom.
" Man at his birth (unhappy son of grief!)
" Is helpless cast on the wide coasts of life,

" In want of all things whence our comforts flow;
" A ſad and moving ſpectacle of woe.
" Infants in ill-preſaging cries complain,
" As conſcious of a coming life of pain.
" All things meantime to beaſts kind Nature grants,
" Prevents their ſufferings, and ſupplies their wants;
" Brought forth with eaſe, they grow, and ſkip, and feed,
" No dangling nurſe, or jingling gewgaw, need;
" In caves they lurk, or o'er the mountains range,
" Nor ever through the year their garment change;
" Unvers'd in arms, and ignorant of war,
" They need no forts, and no invaſion fear;
" Whate'er they want, from Nature's hand they gain;
" The life ſhe gave, ſhe watches to maintain."
Thus impotent in ſenſe, though ſtrong in rage,
The daring Roman does the Gods engage:
But undiſmay'd we face th' intrepid foe,
Suſtain his onſet, and thus ward the blow.
Suppoſe defects in this terreſtrial ſeat,
That Nature is not, as you urge, compleat;
That a divine and wiſe Artificer
Might greater wonders of his art confer,
And might with eaſe on man, and man's abode,
More bounty, more perfection, have beſtow'd;
If in this lower world he has not ſhown
His utmoſt ſkill, ſay, has he therefore none?
We in productions arbitrary ſee
Marks of perfection, different in degree.
Though maſters now more ſkill, now leſs impart,
Yet are not all their works the works of art?

Do poets ſtill ſublimer ſubjects ſing,
Still ſtretch to Heaven a bold aſpiring wing,
Nor e'er deſcend to flocks and labouring ſwains,
Frequent the floods, or range the humble plains?
Did, Grecian Phidias, all thy pieces ſhine
With equal beauty? or, Apelles, thine?
Or Raphael's pencil never chuſe to fall?
Say, are his works Transfigurations all?
Did Buonorota never build, O Rome,
A meaner ſtructure, than thy wondrous dome?
Though, in their works applauded as their beſt,
Greater deſign and genius are expreſt,
Yet is there none acknowledg'd in the reſt?
In all the parts of Nature's ſpacious ſphere
Of art, ten thouſand miracles appear:
And will you not the Author's ſkill adore,
Becauſe you think he might diſcover more?
You own a watch th' invention of the mind,
Though for a ſingle motion 'tis deſign'd
As well as that, which is with greater thought,
With various ſprings, for various motions wrought.
An independent, wiſe, and conſcious Cauſe,
Who freely acts by arbitrary laws,
Who at connexion and at order aims,
Creatures diſtinguiſh'd in perfection frames.
Unconſcious cauſes only ſtill impart
Their utmoſt ſkill, their utmoſt power exert.
Thoſe, which can freely chuſe, diſcern, and know,
In acting can degrees of vigour ſhow,
And more or leſs of art or care beſtow.

If all perfection were in all things shown,
All beauty, all variety, were gone.
As this inferior habitable seat
By different parts is made one whole compleat;
So our low world is only one of those,
Which the capacious universe compose.
Now to the universal whole advert;
The earth regard as of that whole a part,
In which wide frame more noble worlds abound;
Witness, ye glorious orbs, which hang around,
Ye shining planets, that in æther stray,
And thou, bright lord and ruler of the day!
Witness, ye stars, which beautify the skies,
How much do your vast globes in height and size,
In beauty and magnificence, outgo
Our ball of earth, that hangs in clouds below!
Between yourselves too is distinction found,
Of different bulk, with different glory crown'd;
The people, which in your bright regions dwell,
Must this low world's inhabitants excell;
And, since to various planets they agree,
They from each other must distinguish'd be,
And own perfections different in degree.
When we on fruitful Nature's care reflect,
And her exhaustless energy respect,
That stocks this globe, which you Lucretians call
The world's coarse dregs, which to the bottom fall,
With numerous kinds of life, and bounteous fills
With breathing guests the vallies, floods, and hills;
We may pronounce each orb sustains a race
Of living things adapted to the place.

Were

Were the refulgent parts and moſt refin'd
Only to ſerve the dark and baſe deſign'd?
Were all the ſtars, thoſe beauteous realms of light,
At diſtance only hung to ſhine by night,
And with their twinkling beams to pleaſe our ſight?
How many roll in æther, which the eye
Could ne'er, till aided by the glaſs, deſcry,
And which no commerce with the earth maintain?
Are all thoſe glorious empires made in vain?
  Now, as I ſaid, the globe terreſtrial view
As of the whole a part, a mean one too.
Though 'tis not like th' ætherial worlds refin'd,
Yet is it juſt, and finiſh'd in its kind;
Has all perfection which the place demands,
Where in coherence with the reſt it ſtands.
Were to your view the univerſe diſplay'd,
And all the ſcenes of nature open laid;
Could you their place, proportion, harmony,
Their beauty, order, and dependence, ſee,
You'd grant our globe had all the marks of art,
All the perfection due to ſuch a part,
Though not with luſtre, or with magnitude,
Like the bright ſtars, or brighter ſun, endued.
  You oft' declaim on man's unhappy fate;
Inſulting, oft' demand in this debate,
If the kind Gods could ſuch a wretch create?
  But whence can this unhappineſs ariſe?
You ſay, as ſoon as born, he helpleſs lies,
And mourns his woes in ill-preſaging cries.
But does not Nature for the child prepare
The parent's love, the nurſe's tender care,

Who,

Who, of their own forgetful, ſeek his good,
Enfold his limbs in bands, and fill his veins with food?
That man is frail and mortal, is confeſt;
Convulſions rack his nerves, and cares his breaſt;
His flying life is chac'd by ravening pains
Through all its doubles in the winding veins;
Within himſelf he ſure deſtruction breeds,
And ſecret torment in his bowels feeds;
By cruel tyrants, by the ſavage beaſt,
Or his own fiercer paſſions, he 's oppreſt;
Now breathes malignant air, now poiſon drinks;
By gradual death, or by untimely, ſinks.
But theſe objectors muſt the Cauſe upbraid,
That has not mortal man immortal made;
For, if he once muſt feel the fatal blow,
Is it of great importane when, or how?
Should the Lucretian lingering life maintain
Through numerous ages, ignorant of pain,
Still might the diſcontented murmurer cry,
Ah, hapleſs fate of man! ah, wretch, doom'd once to die!
But oh! how ſoon would you, who thus complain,
And Nature's Cauſe of cruelty arraign,
By reaſon's ſtandard this miſtake correct,
And ceaſe to murmur, did you once reflect,
That death removes us only from our ſeat,
Does not extinguiſh life, but change its ſtate.
Then are diſplay'd (oh raviſhing ſurprize!)
Fair ſcenes of bliſs, and triumphs in the ſkies;
To which admitted, each ſuperior mind,
By virtue's vital energy refin'd,

Shines

Shines forth with more than ſolar glory bright,
And, cloath'd with robes of beatific light,
His hours in heavenly tranſports does employ,
Young with immortal bloom from living ſtreams of joy.
You aſk us, why the ſoil the thiſtle breeds?
Why its ſpontaneous births are thorns and weeds?
Why for the harveſt it the harrow needs?
The Author might a nobler world have made,
In brighter dreſs the hills and vales array'd,
And all its face in flowery ſcenes diſplay'd;
The glebe untill'd might plenteous crops have borne,
And brought forth ſpicy groves inſtead of thorn;
Rich fruit and flowers without the gardener's pains
Might every hill have crown'd, have honour'd all the plains:
This Nature might have boaſted, had the Mind,
Who form'd the ſpacious univerſe, deſign'd
That man, from labour free as well as grief,
Should paſs in lazy luxury his life.
But He his creature gave a fertile ſoil,
Fertile, but not without the owner's toil;
That ſome reward his induſtry ſhould crown,
And that his food in part might be his own.
But while, inſulting, you arraign the land,
Aſk, why it wants the plough, or labourer's hand?
Kind to the marble rocks, you ne'er complain
That they without the ſculptor's ſkill and pain
No perfect ſtatue yield, no baſſe relieve,
Or finiſh'd column for the palace give;
Yet if from hills unlabour'd figures came,
Man might have eaſe enjoy'd, though never fame.

You

You may the world of more defects upbraid:
That other works by Nature are unmade;
That ſhe did never at her own expence
A palace rear, and in magnificence
Out-rival art, to grace the ſtately rooms;
That ſhe no caſtle builds, no lofty domes.
Had Nature's hand theſe various works prepar'd,
What thoughtful care, what labour, had been ſpar'd!
But then no realm would one great maſter ſhow,
No Phidias Greece, and Rome no Angelo.
With equal reaſon too you might demand,
Why boats and ſhips require the Artiſt's hand?
Why generous Nature did not theſe provide,
To paſs the ſtanding lake, or flowing tide?
You ſay the hills, which high in air ariſe,
Harbour in clouds, and mingle with the ſkies,
The earth's diſhonour and encumbering load,
Of many ſpacious regions man defraud,
For beaſts and birds of prey a deſolate abode.
But can th' objector no convenience find
In mountains, hills, and rocks, which gird and bind
The mighty frame, that elſe would be disjoin'd?
Do not thoſe heaps the raging tide reſtrain,
And for the dome afford the marble vein?
Does not the river from the mountain flow,
And bring down riches to the vale below?
See, how the torrent rolls the golden ſand
From the high ridges to the flatter land.
The lofty lines abound with endleſs ſtore
Of mineral treaſure, and metallic ore;

With

With precious veins of ſilver, copper, tin,
Without how barren, yet how rich within!
They bear the pine, the oak and cedar yield,
To form the palace, and the navy build.
When the inclement meteors you accuſe,
And aſk if gracious Gods would ſtorms produce;
You ne'er reflect, that by the driving wind
The air from noxious vapours is refin'd,
Freed from the putrid ſeeds of pain and death,
That living creatures might not, by their breath,
Through their warm veins, inſtead of vital food,
Diſperſe contagion, and corrupt their blood.
Without the wind the ſhip were made in vain,
Adventurous merchants could not croſs the main,
Nor ſever'd realms their gainful trade maintain.
Then with this wiſe reflection you diſturb
Your anxious thought, that our terreſtrial orb
In many parts is not by man poſſeſt,
With too much heat, or too much cold, oppreſt.
But in miſtake you this objection found:
Unnumber'd iſles and ſpacious tracts of ground,
Which feel the ſcorching ſun's directer beam,
And did to you inhoſpitable ſeem,
With tawny nations, or with black, abound,
With noble rivers lav'd, with plenty crown'd;
And regions too from the bright orb remote
Are peopled, which you unfrequented thought.
But could Lucretius on the ſun reflect,
His proper diſtance from the earth reſpect,
Obſerve his conſtant road, his equal pace,
His round diurnal, and his annual race;

Could

Could he regard the nature of the light,
Its beauteous luſtre, and its rapid flight,
And its relation to the ſenſe of ſight;
Could he to all theſe miracles advert,
And not in all perceive one ſtroke of art?
Grant, that the motions of the ſun are ſuch,
That ſome have light too little, ſome too much;
Grant, that in different tracks he might have roll'd,
And given each clime more equal heat and cold;
Yet view the revolutions, as they are,
Does there no wiſdom, no deſign, appear?
Could any but a knowing, prudent Cauſe,
Begin ſuch motions, and aſſign ſuch laws?
If the Great Mind had form'd a different frame,
Might not your wanton wit the ſyſtem blame?
Though here you all perfection ſhould not find,
Yet is it all th' Eternal Will deſign'd:
It is a finiſh'd World, and perfect in its kind.
Not that its regions every charm include,
With which celeſtial empires are endued;
Nor is conſummate goodneſs here conferr'd,
If we perfection abſolute regard;
But what 's before aſſerted, we repeat,
Of the vaſt whole it is a part compleat.
But ſince you are diſpleas'd the partial ſun
Is not indulgent to the frigid zone;
Suppoſe more ſuns in proper orbits roll'd,
Diſſolv'd the ſnows, and chac'd the polar cold;
Or grant that this revolv'd in ſuch a way,
As equal heat to all he might convey,
And give their diſtant poles the ſhare of day;

Obſerve

Obſerve how prudent Nature's icy hoard,
With all her nitrous ſtores, would be devour'd;
Then would unbalanc'd heat licentious reign,
Crack the dry hill, and chap the ruſſet plain;
Her moiſture all exhal'd, the cleaving earth
Would yield no fruit, and bear no verdant birth.
You of the pools and ſpacious lakes complain,
And of the liquid deſerts of the main,
As hurtful theſe, or uſeleſs, you arraign.
Beſides the pleaſure, which the lakes afford,
Are not their waves with fiſh delicious ſtor'd?
Does not the wide capacious deep the ſky
With dewy clouds, the earth with rain, ſupply?
Do not the rivers, which the valley lave,
Creep through the ſecret ſubterranean cave,
And to the hills convey the refluent wave?
You then muſt own, the earth the ocean needs,
Which thus the lake recruits, the fountain feeds.
The noxious plant and ſavage animal,
Which you the earth's reproach and blemiſh call,
Are uſeful various ways; if not for food,
For manufactures or for medicine good.
Thus we repel with reaſon, not evade,
The bold objections by Lucretius made.
Pyrrhonians next, of like ambitious aim,
Wanton of wit, and panting after fame,
Who ſtrove to ſink the ſects of chief renown,
And on their ruin'd ſchools to raiſe their own,
Boldly preſum'd, with rhetorician pride,
To hold of any queſtion either ſide.

They

They thought, in every ſubject of debate,
In either ſcale the proof of equal weight.
Aſk, if a God exiſtent they allow?
The vain declaimers will attempt to ſhow,
That, whether you renounce him, or aſſert,
There 's no ſuperior proof on either part.
Suppoſe a God, we muſt, ſay they, conclude
He lives; if ſo, he is with ſenſe endued;
And, if with ſenſe endued, may pain perceive,
And what can ſuffer pain may ceaſe to live.
Pyrrhonians, we a living God adore,
An unexhauſted ſpring of vital power;
But his immortal, uncreated life
No torment feels, and no deſtructive grief.
Does he by different organs taſte or hear?
Or by an eye do things to him appear?
Has he a muſcle, or extended nerve,
Which to impart or pain or pleaſure ſerve?
Of all perfection poſſible poſſeſt,
He finds no want, nor is with woe oppreſt.
Though we can ne'er explore the life divine,
And ſound the bleſt abyſs by reaſon's line,
Yet 'tis not, mortal man, a tranſient life, like thine.
Others, to whom the whole mechanic tribe
With an harmonious ſympathy ſubſcribe,
Nature with empire univerſal crown,
And this high queen the world's Creator own.
If you what builder rear'd the world demand,
They ſay 'twas done by Nature's powerful hand;
If whence its order and its beauty roſe,
Nature, they ſay, did ſo the frame diſpoſe;

If what its ſteady motions does maintain,
And holds of cauſes and effects the chain,
O'er all her works this Sovereign Cauſe preſides,
Upholds the orbs, and all their motions guides.
Since to her bounty we ſuch bleſſings owe,
Our generous Benefactor let us know.
When the word Nature you expreſs, declare,
Form'd in your minds what image does appear?
Can you that term of doubtful ſound explain?
Show it no idle off-ſpring of the brain?
  Sometimes by Nature your enlighten'd ſchool
Intends of things the univerſal whole;
Sometimes it is the order, that connects,
And holds the chain of cauſes and effects;
Sometimes it is the manner, and the way,
In which thoſe cauſes do their force convey,
And in effects their energy diſplay.
That ſhe 's the work itſelf, you oft' aſſert,
As oft' th' artificer, as oft' the art;
That is, that we may Nature clearly trace,
And by your marks diſtinctly know her face;
She 's now the building, now the architect,
And now the rule which does his hand direct.
  But, let this empreſs be whate'er you pleaſe;
Let her be all, or any one of theſe;
She is with reaſon, or ſhe 's not, endued:
If you the firſt affirm, we thence conclude
A God, whoſe Being you oppoſe, you grant:
But, if this mighty queen does reaſon want,
How could this noble fabric be deſign'd,
And faſhion'd by a Maker brute and blind?

Could it of art ſuch miracles invent,
And raiſe a beauteous world of ſuch extent?
Still at the helm does this dark pilot ſtand,
And with a ſteady, never-erring hand,
Steer all the floating worlds, and their ſet courſe command?

That clearer ſtrokes of maſterly deſign,
Of wiſe contrivance, and of judgement, ſhine
In all the parts of Nature, we aſſert,
Than in the brighteſt works of human art:
And ſhall not thoſe be judg'd th' effect of thought,
As well as theſe with ſkill inferior wrought?
Let ſuch a ſphere to India be convey'd,
As Archimede or modern Hugens made;
Will not the Indian, though untaught and rude,
This work th' effect of wiſe deſign conclude?
Is there ſuch ſkill in imitation ſhown?
And in the things, we imitate, is none?
Are not our arts, by artful nature taught,
With pain and careful obſervation fought?

Behold the painter, who with Nature vies:
See his whole ſoul exerted in his eyes!
He views her various ſcenes, intent to trace
The maſter lines, that form her finiſh'd face:
Are thought and conduct in the copy clear,
While none in all th' original appear?

Tell us, what maſter, for mechanicks fam'd,
Has one machine ſo admirably fram'd,
Where you will art in ſuch perfection grant,
As in a living creature, or a plant?

Declare,

Declare, what curious workmanſhip can vie
Or with a hand or foot, an ear, or eye?
That can for ſkill as much applauſe deſerve,
As the fine texture of the fibrous nerve;
Or the ſtupendous ſyſtem, which contains
Th' arterial channels, or the winding veins?
What artificial frame, what inſtrument,
Did one ſuperior genius yet invent,
Which to the bones or muſcles is preferr'd,
If you their order, form, or uſe, regard?
Why then to works of nature is aſſign'd
An Author unintelligent and blind,
When ours proceed from choice and Conſcious Mind?
To this you ſay, that Nature's are indeed
Moſt artful works, but then they ne'er proceed
From Nature acting with deſign and art,
Who void of choice her vigour does exert,
And by unguided motion things produce,
Regardleſs of their order, end, or uſe.
By Tully's mouth thus Cotta does diſpute;
But thus, with eaſe, the Roman we confute:
Say, if in artful things no art is ſhown,
What are the certain marks, that make it known?
How will you artful from unartful bound,
And not th' ideas in our mind confound?
Than this no truth diſplays before our ſight
A brighter beam, or more convincing light,
That ſkilful works ſuppoſe a ſkilful Cauſe,
Which acts by choice, and moves by prudent laws.
Where you, unleſs you are as matter blind,
Conduct and beauteous diſpoſition find,

Conſpiring order, fitneſs, harmony,
Uſe, and convenience; will you not agree,
That ſuch effects could not be undeſign'd,
Nor could proceed but from a Knowing Mind?
Old ſyſtems you may try, or new ones raiſe,
May ſhift and wind, and plot a thouſand ways;
May various words, and forms of diction, uſe,
And with a different cant th' unjudging ear amuſe;
You may affirm, that Chance did things create,
Or let it Nature be, or be it Fate;
Body alone, inert and brute, you 'll find,
The cauſe of all things is by you aſſign'd.
And, after all your fruitleſs toil, if you
A Cauſe diſtinct from Matter will allow,
It muſt be conſcious, not like matter blind,
And ſhew you grant a God, by granting Mind.
Vaninus next, a hardy, modern chief,
A bold oppoſer of Divine Belief,
Attempts Religion's fences to ſubvert,
Strong in his rage, but deſtitute of art;
In impious maxims fixt, he Heaven defy'd,
An unbelieving anti-martyr dy'd.
Strange, that an Atheiſt pleaſure ſhould refuſe,
Relinquiſh life, and death in torment chuſe!
Of ſcience what a deſpicable ſhare
Vaninus own'd, his publiſh'd dreams declare.
Let impious wits applaud a Godleſs Mind,
As bleſt with piercing ſight, and ſenſe refin'd,
Contriv'd and wrought by Nature's careful hand
All the proud ſchools of learning to command;

Let

Let them pronounce each patron of their cauſe
Claims by diſtinguiſh'd merit juſt applauſe;
Yet I this writer's want of ſenſe arraign,
Treat all his empty pages with diſdain,
And think a grave reply miſ-ſpent and vain:
To borrow light, his error to amend,
I would the Atheiſt to Vaninus ſend.
  At length Britannia's ſoil, immortal ſhame!
Brought forth a ſage of celebrated name,
Who with contempt on bleſt Religion trod,
Mock'd all her precepts, and renounc'd his God.
As awful ſhades and horrors of the night
Diſturb the mother, and the child affright,
Who ſee dire ſpectres through the gloomy air
In threatening forms advance, and ſhuddering hear
The groans of wandering ghoſts, and yellings of
    deſpair:
From the ſame ſpring, he ſays, devotion flows,
Conſcience of guilt from dread of vengeance roſe;
Religion is the creature of the ſpleen,
And troubled fancy forms the world unſeen;
That timorous minds, with ſelf-tormenting care,
Create thoſe awful phantoms which they fear.
  Such arms were us'd by impious chiefs of old,
Vain as this modern hero, and as bold.
Who would not this philoſopher adore,
For finding worlds diſcover'd long before?
Can he one flower in all his garden ſhow,
Which in his Grecian maſter's did not grow?
And yet, imperious, with a teacher's air,
Boaſtful he claims a right to wiſdom's chair;

Gaſping with ardent thirſt of falſe renown,
With Grecian wreaths he does his temples crown,
Triumphs with borrow'd ſpoils, and trophies not
his own.
The world, he grants, with clouds was overſpread;
Truth ne'er erected yet her ſtarry head,
Till he, bright Genius, roſe to chace the night,
And through all nature ſhone with new-ſprung light.
But let th' enquirer know, proud Briton! why
Hope ſhould not Gods, as well as fear, ſupply?
Does not th' idea of a God include
The notion of beneficent and good,
Of one to mercy, not revenge, inclin'd,
Able and willing to relieve mankind?
And does not this idea more appear
The object of our hope, than of our fear?
Then tell us, why this paſſion, more than that,
Should build their altars, and the Gods create?
But let us grant the weak and timorous mind
To ſuperſtitious terrors is inclin'd;
That horrid ſcenes, and monſters form'd in air,
By night the children and the mother ſcare;
That apparitions, by a fever bred,
Or by the ſpleen's black vapours, fill the head;
Does that affect the ſage of ſenſe refin'd,
Whoſe body 's healthful, and ſerene his mind?
Yet more, inſulting Briton! let us try
Your reaſon 's force, your arguments apply.
You ſay, ſince ſpectres from the fancy flow,
To timorous fancy Gods their being owe;

Since phantoms to the weak ſeem real things,
Religion from miſtake and weakneſs ſprings.
But though the vulgar have illuſions ſeen,
Thought objects were without, that were within;
Yet we from hence abſurdly ſhould conclude,
All objects of the mind the mind delude;
That our ideas idle are, that none
Were ever real, and that nothing 's known.
But, leaving phantoms and illuſive fear,
Let us at Reaſon's judgement-ſeat appear;
There let the queſtion be ſeverely try'd;
By an impartial ſentence we abide:
Th' Eternal Mind's exiſtence we ſuſtain
By proofs ſo full, by evidence ſo plain,
That none of all the ſciences have ſhown
Such demonſtration of the truths they own.
Spinoſa next, to hide his black deſign,
And to his ſide th' unwary to incline,
For heaven his enſigns treacherous diſplays,
Declares for God, while he that God betrays;
For whom he 's pleas'd ſuch evidence to bring,
As ſaves the name, while it ſubverts the thing.
Now hear his labour'd ſcheme of impious uſe:
No ſubſtance can another e'er produce;
Subſtance no limit, no confinement, knows,
And its exiſtence from its nature flows;
The ſubſtance of the Univerſe is one,
Which is the ſelf-exiſtent God alone.
The ſpheres of æther, which the world incloſe,
And all th' apartments, which the whole compoſe;

The lucid orbs, the earth, the air, the main,
With every different being they contain;
Are one prodigious aggregated God,
Of whom each ſand is part, each ſtone and clod;
Supreme perfections in each inſect ſhine,
Each ſhrub is ſacred, and each weed divine.
  Sages, no longer Ægypt's ſons deſpiſe,
For their cheap Gods, and ſavoury Deities!
No more their coarſe Divinities revile!
To leeks, to onions, to the crocodile,
You might your humble adorations pay,
Were you not Gods yourſelves, as well as they.
  As much you pull Religion's altars down,
By owning all things God, as owning none:
For ſhould all beings be alike divine,
Of worſhip if an object you aſſign,
God to himſelf muſt veneration ſhew,
Muſt be the idol and the votary too;
And their aſſertions are alike abſurd,
Who own no God, or none to be ador'd.

CREATION.

BOOK IV.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE introduction. No man happy, that has not conquered the fears of death. The inability of the Epicurean ſcheme to accompliſh that end. Religion only capable of ſubduing thoſe fears. The hypotheſis of Epicurus concerning the formation of the univerſe ſhewn to be abſurd. I. In a more general ſurvey of the parts of the univerſe. II. By a more cloſe and ſtrict examination of his ſcheme. The principle of motion not accounted for by that ſcheme; nor the determination of it one way. Pondus, gravity, innate mobility, words without a meaning. Deſcent of atoms; upwards and downwards, a middle or centre abſurdly aſſerted by Epicurus in infinite ſpace. His hypotheſis not to be ſupported, whether his matter be ſuppoſed finite or infinite. His ridiculous aſſertion relating to the diurnal and annual motion of the ſun. The impoſſibility of forming the world by the caſual concourſe of atoms. They could never meet if they moved with equal ſpeed. Primitive atoms, being the ſmalleſt parts of matter, would move more ſlowly than bodies of greater bulk, which have more gravity; yet theſe are abſurdly ſuppoſed to move the ſwifteſt. His aſſertion, that ſome primitive atoms have a direct, and others an inclining motion, implies

implies a contradiction. Lucretius's explanation of this inclining motion of ſome firſt atoms not intelligible. The inexplicable difficulty of ſtopping the atoms in their flight, and cauſing them to ſettle in a formed world. The ponderous earth not to be ſuſtained in liquid air. The Epicurean formation of the heavens very ridiculous. No account given by the Epicureans how the ſun and ſtars are upheld in fluid æther. Their idle account of the formation of the air. The variety of figure and ſize given by Epicurus to his atoms, a convincing proof of wiſdom and deſign. Another proof is the diſproportion of the moiſt and dry atoms in the formation of the earth. His ludicrous and childiſh account of the formation of the hollow for the ſea. No account given by Epicurus, or his followers, of the motion of the heavenly orbs, particularly of the ſun.

CARUS, we grant, no man is bleſt, but he
Whoſe mind from anxious thoughts of death is free.
Let laurel wreaths the victor's brows adorn,
Sublime through gazing throngs in triumph borne;
Let acclamations ring around the ſkies,
While curling clouds of balmy incenſe riſe;
Let ſpoils immenſe, let trophies gain'd in war,
And conquer'd kings, attend his rolling car;
If dread of death ſtill unſubdued remains,
And ſecret o'er the vanquiſh'd victor reigns,
Th' illuſtrious ſlave in endleſs thraldom bears
A heavier chain than his led captive wears.
With ſwifteſt wing the fears of future fate
Elude the guards, and paſs the palace-gate;

Traverſe

Traverſe the lofty rooms, and uncontrol'd
Fly hovering round the painted roofs, and bold
To the rich arras cling, and perch on buſt of gold;
Familiar horrors haunt the monarch's head,
And thoughts ill-boding from the downy bed
Chace gentle ſleep; black cares the ſoul infeſt,
And broider'd ſtars adorn a troubled breaſt;
In vain they aſk the charming lyre, in vain
The flatterer's ſweeter voice, to lull their pain;
Riot and wine but for a moment pleaſe;
Delights they oft' enjoy, but never eaſe.
What are diſtinction, honour, wealth, and ſtate,
The pomp of courts, the triumphs of the great;
The numerous troops, that envy'd thrones ſecure,
And ſplendid enſigns of imperial power?
What the high palace, rear'd with vaſt expence,
Unrival'd art, and luxury immenſe,
With ſtatues grac'd by ancient Greece ſupply'd,
With more than Perſian wealth, and Tyrian pride?
What are the foods of all delicious kinds,
Which now the huntſman, now the fowler, finds;
The richeſt wines, which Gallia's happy field,
Which Tuſcan hills, or thine, Iberia, yield?
Nature deprav'd abundance does purſue;
Her firſt and pure demands are cheap and few.
What health promotes, and gives unenvy'd peace,
Is all expenceleſs, and procur'd with eaſe.
Behold the ſhepherd, ſee th' induſtrious ſwain,
Who ploughs the field, or reaps the ripen'd grain,
How mean, and yet how taſteful is their fare!
How ſweet their ſleep! their ſouls how free from care!

They

They drink the ſtreaming cryſtal, and eſcape
Th' inflaming juices of the purple grape;
And, to protect their limbs from rigorous air,
Garments, their own domeſtic work, they wear:
Yet thoughts of death their lonely cots moleſt,
Affright the hind, and break the labourer's reſt.
Since theſe reflections on approaching fate
Diſtruſt and ill-preſaging care create;
'Tis clear we ſtrive for happineſs in vain,
While fears of death within inſulting reign.
But then Lucretian wits abſurdly frame,
To ſink thoſe inbred fears, their impious ſcheme.
To chace the horrors of a conſcious mind,
They deſperate means and wild expedients find;
The hardy rebels aiming to appeaſe
Their fierce remorſe, and dream a while at eaſe,
Of crying guilt th' avenging power diſown,
And pull their high Creator from his throne;
That done, they mock the threats of future pain,
As monſtrous fictions of the poet's brain
Thy force alone, Religion! Death diſarms,
Breaks all his darts, and every viper charms;
Soften'd by thee, the griſly form appears
No more the horrid object of our fears;
We undiſmay'd this awful power obey,
That guides us through the ſafe, though gloomy way,
Which leads to life, and to the bleſt abode,
Where raviſh'd minds enjoy, what here they own'd, a God.
Regard, ye ſages of Lucretian race,
Nature's rich dreſs, behold her lovely face.

Look

Look all around, terreſtrial realms ſurvey,
The iſles, the rivers, and the ſpacious ſea;
Obſerve the air, view with attentive eyes
The glorious concave of the vaulted ſkies;
Could theſe from caſual hits, from tumult thoſe, ariſe?
Can rule and beauty from diſtraction grow?
Can ſymmetry from wild confuſion flow?
When atoms in th' unmeaſur'd ſpace did rove,
And in the dark for doubtful empire ſtrove;
Did intervening Chance the feuds compoſe,
Eſtabliſh friendſhip, and diſarm the foes?
Did this the ancient darkſome horrors chace,
Diſtinction give, and ſpread celeſtial grace
O'er the black diſtricts of the empty ſpace?
Could atoms, which, with undirected flight,
Roam'd through the void, and rang'd the realms of night,
Of reaſon deſtitute, without intent,
Depriv'd of choice, and mindleſs of event,
In order march, and to their poſts advance,
Led by no guide, but undeſigning Chance?
What did th' entangled particles divide,
And ſort the various ſeeds of things ally'd?
To make primæval elements, ſelect
All the fit atoms, and th' unfit reject?
Diſtinguiſh hot from cold, and moiſt from dry,
Range ſome to form the earth, and ſome the ſky?
From the embrace, and gloomy arms, of night,
What freed the glimmering fire, and diſengag'd the light?
Could Chance ſuch juſt and prudent meaſures take?
To frame the world, ſuch diſtribution make?

If

If to your builder you will conduct give,
A power to chuſe, to manage, and contrive,
Your idol Chance, ſuppos'd inert and blind,
Muſt be inroll'd an active conſcious mind.
Did this your wife and ſovereign architect
Deſign the model, and the world erect?
Were by her ſkill the deep foundations laid,
The globes ſuſpended, and the heavens diſplay'd?
By what elaſtic engines did ſhe rear
The ſtarry roof, and roll the orbs in air?
On the formation of the earth reflect;
Is this a blind fortuitous effect?
Did all the groſſer atoms, at the call
Of Chance, file off, to form the ponderous ball,
And undetermin'd into order fall?
Did of themſelves th' aſſembled ſeeds arrive,
And without art this artful frame contrive?
To build the Earth, did Chance materials chuſe,
And through the parts cementing glue diffuſe?
Adjuſt the frontier of the ſea and ſoil,
Balance and hang in air the finiſh'd pile?
Ye towering hills, whoſe ſnowy peaks ariſe
Above the clouds, and winter in the ſkies;
Ye rocks, which on the ſhores your heads advance;
Are you the labour and the care of Chance?
To draw up ſtones of ſuch prodigious weight,
And raiſe th' amazing heaps to ſuch a height,
What huge machine, what forceful inſtrument,
Did your blind builder of the world invent?
Could it diſtinguiſh, could it wall around
The damp and dark apartments under ground?

With

With rocky arches vault the hollow caves,
And form the tracks of ſubterranean waves?
Extend the different mineral veins, and ſpread
For rich metallic ores the genial bed?
What could prepare the gulphs to entertain
Between their ſhores the interpoſing main?
Diſ-join the land, the various realms divide,
And ſpread with ſcatter'd iſles th' extended tide?
Regard th' unnumber'd wonders of the deep,
Where confluent ſtreams, their race completed, ſleep.
Did Chance the compaſs take, and in the dark
The wide dimenſions of the ocean mark?
Then dig the ample cave, and ſtretch the ſhores
Whoſe winding arms confine the liquid ſtores,
Which guſhing from the mountain to the main
Through verdant vallies draw their humid train?
Did it deſign the deep abyſs, and ſpread
The ancient waters on their central bed?
To the wild flood did ſovereign Fortune ſay,
Thus far advance, and here thy billows ſtay:
Be this thy barrier, this encloſing ſand
Thou ſhalt not paſs, nor overflow the land?
And do the waves revere her high command?
Did chemic Chance the furnaces prepare,
Raiſe all the labour-houſes of the air,
And lay crude vapours in digeſtion there?
Where Nature is employ'd, with wondrous ſkill,
To draw her ſpirits, and her drops diſtil;
Meteors for various purpoſes to form,
The breeze to cheer, to terrify the ſtorm;

Did

Did ſhe extend the gloomy clouds on high,
Where all th' amazing fireworks of the ſky
In unconcocted ſeeds fermenting lie?
Till the impriſon'd flames are ripe for birth,
And ruddy bolts exploded wound the earth;
What ready hand applies the kindled match,
Which evening trains of unctuous vapours catch;
Whence ſhoots with lambent flight the falling ſtar,
And flames unhurtful hovering dance in air?
What curious loom does Chance by evening ſpread?
With what fine ſhuttle weave the virgin's thread,
Which, like the ſpider's net, hangs on the graſſy mead?
Let us the moulds to faſhion meteors know,
How theſe produce the hail, and thoſe the ſnow?
What gave the exhalations wings to riſe,
To leave their centre, and poſſeſs the ſkies?
  Let us no longer miſſive weapons throw,
But cloſe the fight, and grapple with the foe;
Submit to reaſon's ſtricteſt teſt their ſcheme,
And by mechanic laws purſue the huddled frame.
See, how th' ambitious architects deſign:
To rear the world without the power divine,
As principles, the great contrivers place
Unbounded matter, in unbounded ſpace:
Matter was firſt, in parts minute, endued
With various figures, various magnitude;
Some, moving in the ſpacious infinite,
Deſcribe a line oblique, and ſome a right;
For, did not ſome from a ſtrait courſe deflect,
They could not meet, they could no world erect:

While unfatigued from endleſs ages paſt,
They rang'd the dark interminable waſte,
Oft claſhing and rencountering in their flight,
Some atoms leap aſide, and ſome upright;
They various ways recoil, and ſwiftly flow
By mutual repercuſſions to and fro,
Till, ſhuffled and entangled in their race,
They claſp each other with a cloſe embrace;
Combin'd by concourſe, mingled and compreſt,
They grow in bulk, and complicated reſt.
Hence did the world and all its parts ariſe!
Hence the bright ſun and ſtars, and hence the ſkies!
Hence ſprung the air, the ocean, and the earth!
And hence all Nature had its caſual birth!
If you demand what wiſe directing mind
The wondrous platform of the world deſign'd;
Did range, divide, and in their order place,
The crude materials of th' unfaſhion'd maſs;
Did move, direct, and all the parts control,
With perfect ſkill, to ſerve the beauteous whole;
Fortune to this high honour they advance,
And no ſurveyor want, no guide, but Chance.
Lucretian maſters, now to make it plain
In building worlds how raw you are, and vain;
Grant that before this mighty frame was rear'd,
Before confuſion fled, and light appear'd,
In the dark void and empty realms of night
Your reſtleſs atoms did purſue their flight;
And in their adverſe paths, and wild career,
By chance rencounter, and by chance cohere;

Thus claſpt in ſtrict embraces they produce
Unnumber'd caſual forms for different uſe:
You, who to clearer reaſon make pretence,
Of wit refin'd, and eminent in ſenſe;
Let us, ye ſons of Epicurus, know
The ſpring, whence all theſe various motions flow.
What vigour puſh'd primæval atoms on?
Was it a foreign impulſe, or their own?
If 'twas a foreign delegated force,
Which mov'd thoſe bodies, and control'd their courſe;
Aſſerting this, you your own ſcheme deſtroy,
And power divine, to form the world, employ.
If from a moving principle within
Your active atoms did their flight begin,
That ſpring, that moving principle explain,
And in the ſchools unrival'd you ſhall reign;
Declare its nature, and aſſign its name;
For motion, and its cauſe, are not the ſame.
We know, you 'll tell us, 'tis impulſive weight,
Mobility, or power to move innate:
Profound ſolution! worthy of your ſchools,
Where reaſon in its boaſted freedom rules.
But thus you mock mankind, and language uſe,
Not to inform the mind, but to amuſe.
Of motion we the principle demand;
You ſay 'tis power to move, and there you ſtand!
But is it to explain, to change the name?
Is not the doubt in different words the ſame?
Do you reveal the ſpring of motion more,
By wiſely calling that a moving power,
Which we had term'd a principle before?

The youngeſt head new-vers'd in reaſoning knows,
That motion muſt a power to move ſuppoſe;
Which while in vain you labour to unfold,
You clearly tell us, that Lucretians hold
An active ſpring, a principle approve,
Diſtinct from matter, which muſt matter move.
Matter, as ſuch, abſtracted in the mind,
We from a power to move diveſted find,
Not more to motion, than to reſt inclin'd;
The power, which motion does to matter give,
We therefore muſt diſtinct from both conceive;
A power to nature given by Nature's Lord,
When firſt he ſpoke the high creating word,
When for his world materials he prepar'd,
And on each part this energy conferr'd.
  Ye vain philoſophers! preſumptuous race!
Who would the Great Eternal Mind diſplace;
Take from the world its Maker, and advance
To his high throne your thoughtleſs idol Chance:
Let us th' enquiry by juſt ſteps purſue;
With motion we your atoms will endue.
We aſk, when in the ſpacious void they ſtray,
Why ſtill they beat one track, and move one way?
Still the ſame flight why do their parties take?
Why this, or that way, no digreſſion make?
  What will to this our Atomiſts reply?
They anſwer, by an innate gravity
The ponderous bodies ſtill are downward borne,
And never upwards of themſelves return:
Acute and ſolid anſwer! ſee a flight,
Worthy of ſineſt wit, and cleareſt ſight!

Do not theſe wiſe mechanic maſters know,
That no man can conceive, or high or low,
Nor find diſtinction of ſuperior place,
Or of inferior, in the empty ſpace
Uncircumſcrib'd, and ignorant of bound,
And where no midſt, no centre, can be found?
Perhaps, your maſter's doctrine to ſuſtain,
And matter's downward motion to explain,
You with his famous Gallic friend aſſert,
That is ſuperior, whence your atoms ſtart,
And that inferior in the empty ſpace
To which they all direct their rapid race.
Now let us recollect, and what you ſay
At large, in one contracted view ſurvey.
You ſay, your atoms move; we aſk you, why?
Becauſe it is their nature, you reply.
But ſince that native power you never ſhew,
You only ſay they move, becauſe they do:
But let your atoms move, we bid you ſay,
Why they move this, and not a different way?
You tell us, 'tis from inbred gravity;
That is, you tell us, 'tis you know not why.
Till what is gravity you let us know,
By ſenſeleſs words how can we wiſer grow?
We give you this ingenite, moving force,
That makes them always downward take their courſe;
We then demand, which place inferior is
Within the ſpacious unconfin'd abyſs?
You ſay 'tis that, to which the atoms bend
Their ſwift career, for ſtill they muſt deſcend;
That is, they downward move, becauſe they downward tend.

Let

Let us, Lucretians, now our taſk purſue,
And of your ſcheme remaining wonders view.
Say, if your atoms of immortal race
Are equal and commenſurate to ſpace:
If ſo, the boundleſs vaſt immenſity
While thus poſſeſt would full of matter be;
For in the vacant (as your ſchools approve)
Should finite matter be ſuppos'd to move,
Not knowing how to ſtop, or where to ſtay,
It unobſtructed muſt purſue its way,
Be loſt in void immenſe, and diſſipated ſtray;
The ſcattering bodies never would combine,
Nor to compoſe a world by concourſe join.
But, if all ſpace is full, if all poſſeſt,
Which ſuppoſition you embrace as beſt,
Then crouded matter would for ever reſt;
Nature no change of place had ever ſeen;
Where all is full, no motion can begin;
For, if it ſhould, you 'll be compell'd to ſay,
Body does body pierce, to force its way;
Or unconfin'd immenſity retreats,
To give your atoms room to change their ſeats.
And here with us Lucretius does agree,
That, if ſome place from matter be not free,
In plenitude no motion could commence,
All would be ſtagnate in the vaſt immenſe.
If it be ſaid, ſmall parts of empty ſpace
Are interſpers'd through all the ſpreading maſs,
By which ſome bodies give to others place;
Then matter, you muſt grant, would finite be,
And ſtretch unequal to immenſity;

And then, as Epicurus judges right,
It would for ever take a uſeleſs flight,
Loſt in expanſion void and infinite.
Beſides, allowing through th' extended whole
Small ſcatter'd ſpaces not of body full,
Then matter, you Lucretians muſt agree,
Has not exiſtence from neceſſity;
For, if its being neceſſary were,
Why are ſome parts of ſpace from matter clear?
Why does it here exiſt, and why not there?

Lucretians, now, which ſide you pleaſe, embrace:
If in your void you finite ſubſtance place,
'Tis diſſipated through th' immenſe abyſs,
And you to form the world materials miſs;
You 'll not the progreſs of your atoms ſtay,
Nor to collect the vagrants find a way.
Thus too your maſter's ſcheme will be deſtroy'd,
Who, wholly to poſſeſs the boundleſs void,
No leſs than matter infinite employ'd.
If you, in honour to your founder's ſkill,
The boundleſs void with boundleſs ſubſtance fill,
Then tell us, how you can your bodies roll
Through ſpace, of matter ſo compleatly full?
The force this ſingle reaſon does exert
Will the foundations of your ſcheme ſubvert:
Nor were it needful to purſue the blow,
Or form a freſh attack, unleſs to ſhow
How ſlight your works in every quarter are,
How ill your huddled ſentiments cohere.

Be this, O Greece, thy everlaſting ſhame,
That thoughtleſs Epicurus rais'd a name,
Who built by artleſs Chance this mighty frame.
Could one whoſe wit ſuch narrow limits bound,
Nature, thy depths unfathomable ſound?
Of his ſagacious thoughts to give a part,
Does not this wiſe philoſopher aſſert
The radiant Sun 's extinguiſh'd every night,
And every morn, rekindled, darts his light?
That the vaſt orb, which caſts ſo far his beams,
Is ſuch, or not much bigger, than he ſeems?
That the dimenſions of his glorious face
Two geometric feet do ſcarce ſurpaſs?
Does he not make the fickle winds convey
The Sun revolving through his crooked way?
But, ſince his ſchool has gain'd ſuch ſpreading fame,
And modern wits his maſter-ſkill proclaim;
Let us yet farther carry this debate,
And, as you aſk, confer on matter weight,
To make it move within the vaſt abyſs,
And downward too, ev'n where no downward is.
If this be true, as you Lucretians ſay,
That atoms wing with equal ſpeed their way,
Then how could this that atom overtake?
How could they claſh, and how colliſions make?
If in a line oblique your bodies rove,
Or in a perpendicular they move,
If ſome advance not ſlower in their race,
And ſome more ſwift ſhould not purſue the chace,
How could they be entangled, how embrace?

'Tis demonſtration, 'tis meridian light,
Thoſe bodies ne'er could juſtle, ne'er could fight,
Nor by their mutual ſhocks be ruffled in their flight.
Since matter of a greater magnitude
Muſt be with greater gravity endued,
Then the minuteſt parts muſt ſtill proceed
With leſs, the greater with the greater ſpeed.
Hence your firſt bodies, which the ſmalleſt are,
On which the ſwifteſt motion you confer,
Muſt be contented with the ſloweſt pace,
And yield to matter of more bulk the race.
How wondrous little muſt thoſe atoms be,
Which you endow with ſuch velocity!
Minute beyond conception, when we find
Bodies ſo ſmall, where many are combin'd!
How many various figures muſt we take,
What numerous complications uſe, to make
Some compound things, ſo ſmall of magnitude,
That all our ſenſes they with eaſe elude!
Light exhalations, that from earth ariſe
Attracted by the ſun-beams through the ſkies,
Which the myſterious ſeeds of thunder bear,
Of winds, and all the meteors of the air;
Though they around us take their conſtant flight,
Their little ſize eſcapes the ſharpeſt ſight.
The fragrant vapours breath'd from rich perfumes,
From Indian ſpices, and Arabian gums,
Though many years they flow, will ſcarce abate
The odoriferous body's bulk or weight.
Though antimonial cups, prepar'd with art,
Their force to wine through ages ſhould impart;

This

This diſſipation, this profuſe expence,
Nor ſhrinks their ſize, nor waſtes their ſtores immenſe.
The powder which deſtructive guns explode,
And by its force their hollow wombs unload,
When rarify'd of ſpace, poſſeſſes more,
Five hundred times, than what it fill'd before.
The ſeeds of fern, which, by prolific heat
Cheer'd and unfolded, form a plant ſo great,
Are leſs a thouſand times than what the eye
Can unaſſiſted by the tube deſcry.
By glaſſes aided, we in liquor ſee
Some living things minute to that degree,
That a prodigious number muſt unite,
To make the ſmalleſt object of the ſight.
How little bodies muſt the light compound,
Which by your maſters is corporeal own'd;
Since the vaſt deluge of refulgent rays,
Which in a day the ſun a thouſand ways
Through his wide empire laviſhly conveys,
Were they collected in one ſolid maſs,
Might not in weight a ſingle drachm ſurpaſs!
At leaſt thoſe atoms wondrous ſmall muſt be,
Small to an unconceivable degree;
Since though theſe radiant ſpoils, diſperſt in air,
Do ne'er return, and ne'er the ſun repair,
Yet the bright orb, whence ſtill new torrents flow,
Does no apparent loſs, no diminution know.
Now, curious wits, who nature's work inſpect
With rapture, with aſtoniſhment, reflect
On the ſmall ſize of atoms, which unite
To make the ſmalleſt particle of light!

Then

Then how minute primæval atoms are,
From this account Lucretians may infer:
Yet they on theſe, without regard to right,
Confer the honour of the quickeſt flight.
  Within the void, with what a ſwift career
Your rapid matter moves will thus appear.
That all mixt bodies are in ſpeed out-done
By your firſt atoms, you with eaſe will own;
For compound beings can no motion have,
But what their firſt conſtituent atoms gave:
Then your primæval ſubſtances exceed
The ſwift-wing'd wind, or ſwifter light, in ſpeed.
How ſoon the ſun-beams at the morning's birth
Leap down from heaven, and light upon the earth!
Prodigious flight! they in few moments paſs
The vaſt etherial interpoſing ſpace.
Should you enjoin a rock ſo hard a taſk,
It would more years, than light will minutes, aſk.
One atom then (ſo you 'll be forc'd to ſay)
Muſt rocks and hills and the whole globe outweigh;
Since it exceeds them by its ſwifter flight,
And ſwifter motion ſprings from greater weight.
  If nature's rule your atoms do enjoin
To move directly downward in a line;
Say, how can any from that path decline?
Th' inclining motion then, which you ſuppoſe,
Whence the firſt concourſe of your atoms roſe,
Muſt the great maxim of your ſchools ſubvert,
Which ſtill with one confederate voice aſſert,
That matter by neceſſity deſcends
In lines direct, yet part obliquely tends.

And

And thus your matter, by its native force,
To different points would ſteer a different courſe;
Determin'd by the ſame impulſive weight,
Move in a line oblique, and in a ſtraight.
To heal your ſyſtem's deep and ghaſtly wound,
Which this objection gives, Lucretius found
A method; who a motion did invent
Not ſtraight entirely, nor entirely bent,
Which forms a line to crooked ſomewhat like,
Slanting almoſt, and, as it were, oblique.
Who does not now this wondrous bard adore?
See reaſon's conquering light, and wit's reſiſtleſs power?
If atoms, after their eternal dance,
Into this beauteous fabrick leap'd by chance;
If they combin'd by caſual concourſe; ſay,
What, in a free and unobſtructed way,
Did in a full career your atoms ſtay?
What mounds, what force, when ruſhing from the height
Of ſpace immenſe, could ſtop them in their flight?
Why in their road did they not forward paſs?
But ſay, where now we find the ſettled maſs,
Why did they ceaſe from moving in deſpite
Of their own nature, and impelling weight?
Had the wiſe troops ſagacity to know,
That, there arriv'd, they ſhould no further go?
That in this point of all the ſpacious void,
To form a world they were to be employ'd?
Did they, in proſpect of ſo great a good,
In this one place of all the liquid road,
Aſſ their encumbering gravity unload?

Fatigued,

Fatigued, and ſpent with labour infinite,
Did they grow torpid, and unapt for flight?
Or, in th' embrace and downy lap of air
Lull'd and enchanted, did they ſettle there?
  Grant in this ſingle place by chance they met,
That there by chance they did their weight forget;
It happen'd there they form'd a mighty maſs,
Where yet no order, no diſtinction, was:
Let this be ſo; we aſk you to explain
The wondrous Power that did the parts ſuſtain,
For ſtill their nature and their weight remain.
What from deſcent ſhould ponderous matter ſtay,
When no more ponderous matter ſtops its way?
Can airy columns prop the mighty ball,
Its preſſure balance, and prevent its fall?
And after this remains a mighty taſk,
Which more than human ſkill and power will aſk,
The ſtrong myſterious cements to unfold,
Which atoms ſtrictly complicated hold.
  But let us leave the heap in air's embrace,
To reſt unmov'd within the empty ſpace,
Which knows no height, or depth, or middle place:
Tell, how you build the chambers of the ſky,
Extend the ſpheres, and hang the orbs on high?
You ſay, when matter firſt began to fall,
And ſettle into this terreſtrial ball,
Preſs'd from the earth thin exhalations roſe,
Vapours and ſteams, materials to compoſe
The ſpacious regions of the liquid air,
The heavens, and all the luminaries there:

Theſe vapours ſoon (miraculous event!),
Shuffled by chance, and mix'd by accident,
Into ſuch ranks and beauteous order fell,
As no effect of wiſdom can excel.
Hence did the planets, hung in æther, ſtray!
Hence roſe the ſtars, and hence the milky way!
Hence did the ſun along the ſkies advance!
The ſource of day, but ſprung from night and chance!
But who can ſhew the legends, that record
More idle tales, or fables ſo abſurd?
Does not your ſcheme affront ev'n vulgar ſenſe;
That ſpheres of ſuch a vaſt circumference,
That all the orbs, which in the regions roll,
Stretching from eaſt to weſt, from pole to pole,
Should their conſtructure, and their beauty, owe
To vapours preſs'd from this poor ball below?
From this ſmall heap could exhalations riſe
Enough, and fit, to ſpread and vault the ſkies?
Lucretius thus the manner has diſplay'd
How meteors, not how heavenly globes, are made.
But grant the ſteams, which by expreſſion roſe,
Did all the ſpheres and every orb compoſe;
Since their ingenite gravity remains,
What girder binds, what prop the frame ſuſtains?
The ſun's bright beams, which you of matter make,
From Heaven their downward flight perpetual take:
Why does not then his body, which outweighs
By infinite degrees his golden rays,
By its own force precipitated fall,
And hide in ruins this terreſtrial ball?

Can

Can air, unable to ſuſtain the light,
Support the ſun of ſuch ſuperior weight;
And all the ponderous heavenly orbs ſuſpend
Againſt their nature, which does downward tend?
Tell, wiſe Lucretius, tell the ſecret art,
Which keeps the heavens and earth ſo long apart.
Thus too the air, preſs'd from this maſs, you ſay,
Between the earth and ſkies expanded lay;
Not with intention that the ſolar light
Through the thin gulph might take an eaſy flight;
Or that with nitrous food it ſhould inſpire
The breathing lungs, and feed the vital fire;
But mere contingence did the gulph extend,
Regardleſs of convenience, uſe, or end.
Now, vaunting poet! ſhould it be confeſs'd,
That from the earth the air is thus expreſs'd;
Since things by heavier things are upward thrown,
Which tend with ſtronger gravitation down;
Why are the ſun, and the fair orbs of light,
All which ſo far exceed the air in weight,
Hung from the centre at a greater height?
Why do not theſe their Nature's law obey,
Ruſh from above, and near the centre ſtay,
And make all lighter bodies give them way?
Tell us, Lucretius, why they ne'er purſue
This natural bent, and this undoubted due?
Since to the earth you give the middle place,
To which all heavy things direct their race;
If nothing does obſtruct, by certain fate
Things would in order of their different weight

Lie

Lie round the earth, and make one mighty heap;
They would their place, as different ſtrata, keep.
Nor would the air, or interceding ſky,
Between the diſtant orbs and worlds divided lie;
Æther and air would claim the higheſt place,
The ſtars and planets would the earth embrace,
As now the ocean floats upon its face.
In vain you labour by mechanic rules,
In vain exhauſt the reaſon of your ſchools,
Theſe queſtions to reſolve, and to explain
How ſeparate worlds were made, and ſeparate ſtill remain.
Since to your uncompounded atoms you
Figures in number infinite allow,
From which, by various combination, ſprings
This unconfin'd diverſity of things;
Are not, in this, deſign and counſel clear?
Does not the wiſe Artificer appear,
Who the corporeal particles endued
With different ſhape, and different magnitude,
That from their mixtures all things might have birth,
In the wide ſea, and air, and heaven, and earth?
To all theſe figures of diſtinguiſh'd kind,
And different ſizes, are not ends aſſign'd?
Then own their cauſe did act with wiſe intent,
Which did thoſe ſizes ſquare, and every ſhape invent.
When atoms firſt the world began to frame,
Is it not ſtrange that every number came
Of ſuch a figure, and of ſuch a ſize,
As ſerv'd to found the earth, and ſpread the ſkies?
Had they not met in ſuch proportion, were
Their form and number not as now they are,

In

In a rude maſs they had confus'dly join'd,
Not in a finiſh'd world, like this, combin'd.
Did theſe aſſembled ſubſtances reflect,
That here a beauteous frame they muſt erect?
Did they a general council wiſely call,
To lay the platform of each mighty ball?
To ſettle prudent rules, and orders make,
In rearing worlds, what methods they ſhould take?
To every atom was his taſk enjoin'd?
His poſt, and fellow-labourers, aſſign'd?
Did they conſent what parts they ſhould compoſe;
That theſe ſhould æther make, or water thoſe?
That ſome ſhould be the moon, and ſome the earth?
Thoſe give the ſun, and theſe the planet birth?
If all theſe noble worlds were undeſign'd,
And carry'd on without a Conſcious Mind;
Oh, happy accident! auſpicious chance!
That in ſuch order made the work advance!
At length to ſuch admir'd perfection brought
The finiſh'd ſtructure, as it had been wrought
With art tranſcendent and conſummate thought!
Since 'tis an outrage done to common ſenſe
To fix a central point in ſpace immenſe;
Why is a middle to the earth aſſign'd,
To which your ponderous bodies are inclin'd?
Beſides, reflect how this terreſtrial maſs
Does the whole ſea a thouſand times ſurpaſs;
Which in a line, if drawn directly down,
More than a mile in depth is rarely known.
Now if by chance more watery atoms came
Than earthy, to compoſe this wondrous frame;

Or had they both in equal number met,
Which might as well have been, had Chance thought fit,
Or if the watery (we no farther preſs)
Were but an hundred times in number leſs;
This globe had lain, if not a general flood,
At leaſt a fen, a maſs of ooze and mud,
With no rich fruit, or verdant beauty, bleſt,
Wild and unpeopled, or by man, or beaſt.
Who will our orb's unequal face explain,
Which Epicurus made all ſmooth and plain?
How did thy rocks, O Earth! thy hills, ariſe?
How did thy giant ſons invade the ſkies?
Lucretius, that it happen'd thus, replies.
Now give us leave, great Poet, to demand,
How the capacious hollow in the land
Was firſt produc'd, with eaſe to entertain
All the aſſembled waters of the main?
When earth was made, this hollow for the ſea
Was form'd; but how it happen'd ſo to be?
It on a time fell out, that every wave
Forſook the earth, and fill'd the mighty cave,
Which happen'd opportunely to be there,
Where now their heads the rolling billows rear.
It then fell out, that ſtones did rocks compoſe,
That vales ſubſided, and that hills aroſe.
Thus the formation of the world you know;
So all events fell out, and all things happen'd ſo.
Can tales more ſenſeleſs, ludicrous, and vain,
By winter-fires old nurſes entertain?
Does this unfold how all things firſt were made
Without divine and ſupernatural aid?

His penetration has Lucretius ſhown,
By ſaying things proceed from Chance alone,
As their efficient cauſe, that is, from none?
But let your troops, which rang'd the plains of night,
And through the vacant wing'd their careleſs flight,
The high command of ruling Chance obey;
Unguided and unconſcious of the way,
Let them advance to one determin'd place,
Preſcrib'd by Chance, in all th' unmeaſur'd ſpace;
Their proper ſtations undirected find,
To form a world that never was deſign'd;
Let all the rolling globes, and ſpacious ſkies,
From happy hits of heedleſs atoms riſe;
Be thus the earth's unmov'd foundations laid,
Thus the thin regions of the air diſplay'd;
Chance ſhall the planets in their place ſuſpend,
Between thoſe worlds th' etherial plains extend;
Direct the ſun to that convenient ſeat,
Whence he diſplays his luſtre and his heat.
This labour, all this progreſs, is in vain,
Unleſs the orbs their various motions gain:
For let the ſun in buoyant æther float,
Nor nearer to the earth, nor more remote;
Yet did his orb unmov'd its beams diffuſe,
He 'd ſure deſtruction to the earth produce;
One half for heat, and one for cold, would pray,
This would abhor the night, and that the day:
Did he not yearly through the zodiack paſs,
Were he not conſtant to his daily race,
He would not, by alternate ſhade and light,
Produce the needful change of day and night:

Nor

Nor would the various ſeaſons of the year,
By turns revolving, riſe and diſappear.
Now, can judicious Atomiſts conceive,
Chance to the ſun could this juſt impulſe give,
By which the ſource of day ſo ſwiftly flies,
His ſtages keeps, and traverſes the ſkies?
We aſk you, whence theſe conſtant motions flow?
Will learned heads reply, they happen'd ſo?
You ſay, the ſolar orb, firſt mov'd by chance,
Does north and ſouth, and eaſt and weſt, advance:
We aſk, why firſt in theſe determin'd ways
He choſe to move? Why thence he never ſtrays?
Why did he ne'er, ſince time began, decline
His round diurnal, or his annual line?
So ſteadily does fickle Fortune ſteer
Th' obedient orb, that it ſhould never err?
Should never ſtart aſide, and never ſtray?
Never in pathleſs æther miſs his way?
Why does he ne'er beyond the tropicks go?
Why ſtill revolve? why travel to and fro?
Will it a wiſe philoſopher content,
To ſay theſe motions came by accident,
That all is undeſign'd, fortuitous event?
But if the ſluggiſh ſun you 'll not diſturb,
But motion give to this terreſtrial orb;
Still of the earth we the ſame queſtion aſk,
Which to explain, you have as hard a taſk.
Can Chance this frame, theſe artful ſcenes erect,
Which knows not works leſs artful to effect?
Did it mechanic engines e'er produce,
A globe, or tube of aſtronomic uſe?

Why do not veſſels, built and rigg'd by Chance,
Drawn in long order, on the billows dance?
Might not the Sovereign Cauſe with greater eaſe
A navy build, than make the winds and ſeas?
Let atoms once the form of letters take
By Chance, and let thoſe huddled letters make
A finiſh'd poem by a lucky hit,
Such as the Grecian, or the Mantuan, writ;
Then we 'll embrace the doctrines you advance,
And yield the world's fair poem made by Chance.

CREATION.

BOOK V.

THE ARGUMENT.

The introduction. A deſcription of the calamitous ſtate of mankind, by reaſon of innumerable woes and ſufferings to which they are obnoxious. Diſeaſes of the body. Trouble and grief of mind. Violence and oppreſſion. The viciſſitude of human affairs, and the certain proſpect of death. Whence it appears that it ſuits the ſtate of mankind, and therefore is deſirable, there ſhould be a God. Arguments againſt the Fataliſts, who aſſert the eternity of the world. There muſt be granted ſome ſelf-exiſtent and independent being. The corporeal world cannot be that being: proved from its mutability, and the variety of forms riſing and diſappearing in the ſeveral parts of nature; from the poſſibility of conceiving, without any conſequent contradiction, leſs or more parts in the world, than are actually exiſtent; from the poſſibility of plants and animals having had different ſhapes, and limbs, from what they now have. The pretended fatal chain of things not ſelf-exiſtent and independent; becauſe all its links or parts are dependent, and obnoxious to corruption. Fate, a word without ſenſe or meaning. Two more arguments againſt the eternity of the world, from the contemplation of the light of the ſun, and of motion. Ariſtotle's ſcheme conſidered and confuted.

AH, hapleſs mortal man! ah, rigid fate!
What cares attend our ſhort, uncertain ſtate!
How wide a front, how deep and black a rear,
What ſad varieties of grief and fear,
Drawn in array, exert their fatal rage,
And gall obnoxious life through every ſtage,
From infancy to youth, from youth to age!
Who can compile a roll of all our woes?
Our friends are faithleſs, and ſincere our foes;
The poiſon'd arrows of an envious tongue
Improve our errors, and our virtues wrong;
Th' oppreſſor now with arbitrary might
Tramples on law, and robs us of our right;
Dangers unſeen on every ſide invade,
And ſnares o'er all th' unfaithful ground are laid.
Oft' wounds from foreign violence we feel,
Now from the ruffian's, now the warrior's, ſteel;
By bruiſes or by labour we are pain'd;
A bone disjointed, or a ſinew ſtrain'd;
Now feſtering ſores afflict our tortur'd limbs;
Now to the yielding heart the gangrene climbs.
Acute diſtempers fierce our veins aſſail,
Ruſh on with fury, and by ſtorm prevail;
Others with thrift diſpenſe their ſtores of grief,
And by the ſap prolong the ſiege of life;
While to the grave we for deliverance cry,
And, promis'd ſtill, are ſtill denied to die.
See Colic, Gout, and Stone, a cruel train,
Oppos'd by all the healing race in vain;

Their

Their various racks and lingering plagues employ,
Relieve each other, and by turns annoy,
And, tyrant like, torment, but not deſtroy.
We noxious inſects in our bowels feed,
Engender deaths, and dark deſtruction breed.
The Spleen with ſullen vapours clouds the brain,
And binds the ſpirits in its heavy chain:
Howe'er the cauſe fantaſtic may appear,
Th' effect is real, and the pain ſincere.
Hydropic wretches by degrees decay,
Growing the more, the more they waſte away;
By their own ruins they augmented lie,
With thirſt and heat amidſt a deluge fry:
And while in floods of water theſe expire,
More ſcorching periſh by the Fever's fire;
Stretch'd on our downy, yet uneaſy beds,
We change our pillows, and we raiſe our heads;
From ſide to ſide for reſt in vain we turn,
With cold we ſhiver, or with heat we burn;
Of night impatient, we demand the day;
The day arrives, and for the night we pray;
The night and day ſucceſſive come and go,
Our laſting pains no interruption know.
Since Man is born to ſo much woe and care,
Muſt ſtill new terrors dread, new ſorrows bear;
Does it not ſuit the ſtate of human kind,
There ſhould preſide a good Almighty Mind?
A Cauſe Supreme, that might all nature ſteer,
Avert our danger, and prevent our fear;
Who, when implor'd, might timely ſuccour give,
Solace our anguiſh, and our wants relieve;

Father of comfort, might our ſouls ſuſtain,
When preſt with grief, and mitigate our pain?
'Tis certain ſomething from all ages paſt
Without beginning was, and ſtill will laſt;
For if of time one period e'er had been
When nothing was, then nothing could begin.
That things ſhould to themſelves a being give,
Reluctant reaſon never can conceive.
If you affirm, effects themſelves produce,
You ſhock the mind, and contradiction chuſe;
For they, 'tis clear, muſt act and move, before
They were in being, or had motive power;
As active cauſes muſt of right at once
Exiſtence claim, and as effects renounce.
Then ſomething is, which no beginning had,
A cauſeleſs Cauſe, or nothing could be made,
Which muſt by pure neceſſity exiſt,
And whoſe duration nothing can reſiſt.
Let us enquire, and ſearch by due degrees,
What, who, this Self-exiſtent being is.
Should this material world's capacious frame
Uncaus'd and independent being claim;
It would, thus form'd and faſhion'd as we ſee,
Derive exiſtence from neceſſity,
And then to ages unconfin'd muſt laſt
Without the leaſt diverſity or waſte.
Neceſſity, view'd with attentive thought,
Does plain impoſſibility denote,
That things ſhould not exiſt, which actual are,
Or in another ſhape, or different modes appear.

But

But ſee, in all corporeal Nature's ſcene,
What changes, what diverſities, have been!
Matter not long the ſame appearance makes,
But ſhifts her old, and a new figure takes:
If now ſhe lies in Winter's rigid arms,
Diſhonour'd, and deſpoil'd of all her charms,
Soft vernal airs will looſe th' unkind embrace,
And genial dews renew her wither'd face;
Like fabled nymphs transform'd, ſhe 's now a tree,
Now weeps into a flood, and ſtreaming ſeeks the ſea;
She 's now a gaudy fly, before a worm,
Below a vapour, and above a ſtorm;
This ooze was late a monſter of the main,
That turf a lowing grazer of the plain,
A lion this did o'er the foreſt reign.
Regard that fair, that branching laurel-plant,
Behold that lovely bluſhing amarant;
One might have William's broken frame aſſum'd,
And one from bright Maria's duſt have bloom'd.
Theſe ſhifting ſcenes, theſe quick rotations, ſhow
Things from neceſſity could never flow,
But muſt to mind and choice precarious being owe.
Let us ſuppoſe that Nature ever was,
Without beginning, and without a cauſe;
As her firſt order, diſpoſition, frame,
Muſt then ſubſiſt unchangeably the ſame;
So muſt our mind pronounce, it would not be
Within the reach of poſſibility,
That e'er the world a being could have had
Different from what it is, or could be made

Of

Of more or leſs, or other parts, than thoſe
Which the corporeal univerſe compoſe.
Now, Fataliſt, we aſk, if thoſe ſubvert
Reaſon's eſtabliſh'd maxims, who aſſert
That we the world's exiſtence may conceive,
Though we one atom out of Nature leave;
Though ſome one wandering orb, or twinkling ſtar,
Were abſent from the heavens, which now is there;
Though ſome one kind of plant, or fly, or worm,
No being had, or had another's form?
And might not other animals ariſe,
Of different figure, and of different ſize?
In the wide womb of poſſibility
Lie many things, which ne'er may actual be;
And more productions of a various kind
Will cauſe no contradiction in the mind.
'Tis poſſible the things in Nature found
Might different forms and different parts have own'd:
The boar might wear a trunk, the wolf a horn,
The peacock's train the bittern might adorn;
Strong tuſks might in the horſe's mouth have grown,
And lions might have ſpots, and leopards none.
But, if the world knows no ſuperior cauſe,
Obeys no ſovereign's arbitrary laws;
If abſolute neceſſity maintains
Of cauſes and effects the fatal chains;
What could one motion ſtop, change one event?
It would tranſcend the wide, the vaſt extent,
The utmoſt ſtretch of poſſibility,
That things, from what they are, ſhould diſagree.

If, to elude this reaſoning, you reply,
Things what they are, are by neceſſity;
Which never elſe ſo aptly could conſpire
To ſerve the whole, and Nature's ends acquire;
To form the beauty, order, harmony,
Which we through all the works of Nature ſee:
Ready we this aſſertion will allow,
For what can more exalted wiſdom ſhow?
With zeal we this neceſſity defend
Of means directed to their uſeful end;
But 'tis not that which Fataliſts intend,
Nor that which we oppoſe in this debate,
An uncontrol'd neceſſity of fate,
Which all things blindly does and muſt produce,
Unconſcious of their goodneſs and their uſe,
Which cannot ends deſign, nor means convenient chuſe.

If you perſiſt, and fondly will maintain
Of cauſes and effects an endleſs train;
That this ſucceſſive ſeries ſtill has been,
Will never ceaſe, and never did begin;
That things did always, as they do, proceed,
And no Firſt Cauſe, no wiſe Director, need:
Say, if no links of all your fatal chain
Free from corruption and unchang'd remain;
If of the whole each part in time aroſe,
And to a cauſe its borrow'd being owes;
How then the whole can independent be?
How have a being from neceſſity?
Is not the whole, ye learned heads, the ſame
With all the parts, and different but in name?

Could

Could e'er that whole the leaſt perfection ſhow,
Which from the parts, that form it, did not flow?
Then, tell us, can it from its parts derive,
What in themſelves thoſe parts had not to give?
Farther to clear the ſubject in debate,
Inform us, what you underſtand by Fate.
Have you a juſt idea in the mind
Of this great cauſe of things by you aſſign'd?
If you the order and dependence mean
By which effects upon their cauſes lean,
The long ſucceſſion of th' efficient train,
And firm coherence of th' extended chain;
Then Fate is nothing but a mode of things,
Which from continued revolution ſprings;
A pure relation and a mere reſpect
Between the cauſe effective and th' effect.
If cauſes and effects themſelves are that
Which your clear-ſighted ſchools intend by Fate;
Then Fate by no idea can be known,
'Tis one thing only, as a heap is one;
You no diſtinguiſh'd being by it mean,
But all th' effects and cauſes that have been.
If you aſſert, that each efficient cauſe
Muſt act by fix'd inevitable laws;
If you affirm this neceſſary ſtate,
And tell us this neceſſity is Fate;
When will you bleſs the world with light to ſee
The ſpring and ſource of this neceſſity?
Say, what did ſo diſpoſe, ſo things ordain
To form the links of all the caſual chain,

That

That Nature by inevitable force
Should run one ring, and keep one ſteady courſe?
That things muſt needs in one ſet order flow,
And all events muſt happen as they do?
Can you no proof of your aſſertion find?
Produce no reaſon to convince the mind,
That Nature this determin'd way muſt go?
Are all things thus, becauſe they muſt be ſo?
We grant with eaſe there is neceſſity,
The Source of things ſhould ſelf-exiſtent be.
But then He 's not a neceſſary cauſe;
He freely acts by arbitrary laws:
He gave to beings motive energy,
And active things to paſſive did apply;
In ſuch wiſe order all things did diſpoſe,
That of events neceſſity aroſe:
Without his aid, ſay, how you will maintain
Your fatal link of cauſes? Hence 'tis plain,
While the word Fate you thus affect to uſe,
You coin a ſenſeleſs term, th' unwary to amuſe.
You, who aſſert the world did ne'er commence,
Prepare againſt this reaſoning your defence.
If ſolar beams, which through th' expanſion dart,
Corporeal are, as learned ſchools aſſert;
Since ſtill they flow, and no ſupply repays
The laviſh Sun his diſſipated rays;
Grant, that his radiant orb did ne'er begin,
And that his motions have eternal been,
Then, by eternal, infinite expence,
By unrecruited waſte, and ſpoils immenſe,

By certain fate to ſlow deſtruction doom'd,
His glorious ſtock long ſince had been conſum'd;
Of light unthrifty, and profuſe of day,
The ruin'd globe had ſpent his lateſt ray,
Diſpers'd in beams eternally diſplay'd,
Had loſt in æther roam'd, and looſe in atoms ſtray'd.
Grant, that a grain of matter would outweigh
The light the ſun diſpenſes in a day
Through all the ſtages of his heavenly way;
That in a year the golden torrents, ſent
From the bright ſource, its loſſes ſcarce augment;
Yet without end if you the waſte repeat,
Th' eternal loſs grows infinitely great.
Then, ſhould the ſun of finite bulk ſuſtain
In every age the loſs but of a grain;
If we ſuppoſe thoſe ages infinite,
Could there remain one particle of light?
Reflect, that motion muſt abate its force,
As more or leſs obſtructed in its courſe;
That all the heavenly orbs, while turning round,
Have ſome reſiſtance from the medium found:
Be that reſiſtance ne'er ſo faint and weak,
If 'tis eternal, 'twill all motion break;
If in each age you grant the leaſt decreaſe,
By infinite ſucceſſion it muſt ceaſe.
Hence, if the orbs have ſtill reſiſted been
By air, or light, or æther ne'er ſo thin;
Long ſince their motion muſt have been ſuppreſt,
The ſtars had ſtood, the ſun had lain at reſt;
So vain, ſo wild a ſcheme, you Fataliſts have dreſs'd.

Let

Let us the wiſe poſitions now ſurvey
Of Ariſtotle's ſchool, who 's pleas'd to ſay
Nothing can move itſelf, no inward power
To any being motion can procure.
Whate'er is mov'd, its motion muſt derive
From ſomething elſe, which muſt an impulſe give:
And yet no being motion could begin;
Elſe motion might not have eternal been.
That matter never did begin to move,
But in th' immenſe from endleſs ages ſtrove,
The Stagyrite thus undertakes to prove.
He ſays, of motion time the meaſure is;
Then that 's eternal too, as well as this.
Motion through ages without limit flows,
Since time, its meaſure, no beginning knows.
This feeble baſe upholds our Author's hopes,
And all his mighty ſuperſtructure props.
On this he all his towering fabric rears,
Sequel on ſequel heaps, to reach the ſpheres.
But if this definition you deny
Of time, on which his building does rely,
You bring his lofty Babel from the ſky;
A thouſand fine deductions you confound,
Scatter his waſte philoſophy around,
And level all his ſtructure with the ground.
We then this definition thus defeat:
Time is no meaſure, which can motion meet;
For men of reaſoning faculties will ſee,
That time can nothing but duration be
Of beings; and duration can ſuggeſt
Nothing or of their motion, or their reſt;

Only prolong'd exiſtence it implies,
Whether the thing is mov'd, or quiet lies.
This ſingle blow will all the pile ſubvert,
So proudly rais'd, but with ſo little art.
But, ſince the Author has ſuch fame acquir'd,
And as a God of ſcience been admir'd,
A ſtricter view we 'll of his ſyſtem take,
And of the parts a ſhort examen make.
Let us obſerve, what light his ſcheme affords,
His undigeſted heap of doubtful words.
Great Stagyrite, the loſt enquirer ſhow
The ſpring, whence motion did for ever flow;
Since nothing of itſelf e'er moves or ſtrives,
Tell what begins, what the firſt impulſe gives.
Hear how the man, who all in fame ſurmounts,
For motion's ſpring and principle accounts.
To his ſupreme, unmov'd, unactive God,
He the firſt ſphere appoints, a bleſt abode;
Who ſits ſupinely on his azure throne,
In contemplation of himſelf alone;
Is wholly mindleſs of the world, and void
Of providential care, and unemploy'd.
To all the ſpheres inferior are aſſign'd
Gods ſubaltern, and of inferior kind:
On theſe he ſelf-exiſtence does confer,
Who, as the God ſupreme, eternal are;
With admiration mov'd, and ardent love,
They all their ſpheres around in order move;
And from theſe heavenly revolutions flow
All motions, which are found in things below.

If you demand by what impulſive force
The Under-Gods begin their circling courſe:
He ſays, as things deſirable excite
Deſire, and objects move the appetite;
So his firſt God, by kindling ardent love,
Does all the Gods in ſeats inferior move:
Thus mov'd, they move around their mighty ſpheres,
With their refulgent equipage of ſtars;
From ſphere to ſphere communicate the dance,
Whence all in heavenly harmony advance;
And from this motion propagated riſe
All motions in the earth, and air, and ſkies.
And thus by learned Ariſtotle's mind
All things were form'd, yet nothing was deſign'd.
He owns no choice, no arbitrary will,
No artiſt's hand, and no exerted ſkill;
All motion flows from neceſſary fate,
Which nothing does reſiſt, or can abate;
Things ſink and riſe, a being loſe or gain
In a coherent, undiſſolving chain
Of cauſes and effects, which Nature's courſe ſuſtain.
Th' unmoveable Supreme the reſt does move,
As proper objects raiſe deſire and love;
They, mov'd without their choice, without conſent,
Move all their ſpheres around without intent:
Whate'er he calls his moving cauſe, to chuſe
He gives that cauſe no power, or to refuſe.
And thus from fate all artful order ſprings,
This rear'd the world, this is the riſe of things.
Now give us leave to aſk, great Stagyrite!
How the firſt God th' inferior does excite.

Of his own ſubſtance does he parts convey,
Whoſe motive force the Under-Gods obey?
If ſo, he may be chang'd, he may decay.
But if by ſteadfaſt gazing they are mov'd,
And admiration of the object lov'd;
If thoſe below their motive force acquire
From the ſtrong impulſe of divine deſire;
Tell us, what good your God Supreme can grant,
Which thoſe beneath, to make them happy, want.
If admiration of the God Supreme,
And heavenly raptures, ſhould their breaſts inflame,
Is that of motion a reſiſtleſs cauſe,
Of motion conſtant to eternal laws?
Might not each ſecond God inactive lie
On his blue ſphere, and fix his raviſh'd eye
On the Supreme Unmoveable, and ne'er
Be forc'd to roll around his ſolid ſphere?
Say, how could wonder drive them from their place?
How in a circle make them run their race?
How keep them ſteady in one certain pace?
He this a fundamental maxim lays,
That Nature wiſely acts in all her ways;
That ſhe purſues the things which moſt conduce
To order, beauty, decency, and uſe.
Who can to reaſon this affront endure?
Should it deriſion cauſe, or anger more,
To hear a deep philoſopher aſſert
That Nature, not endued with ſkill or art,
Of liberty of choice, of reaſon void,
Still wiſely acts, where-ever ſhe's employ'd?

Can

Can actions be denominated wiſe,
Which from a brute neceſſity ariſe,
Which the blind agent never did intend,
The means unchoſen, and unknown the end?
On this be laid the ſtreſs of this debate;
What wiſely acts can never act by fate.
The means and end muſt firſt be underſtood;
The means, as proper; and the end, as good;
The act muſt be exerted with intent
By uſing means to gain the wiſh'd event.
But can a ſenſeleſs and unconſcious cauſe,
By foreign impulſe mov'd, and fatal laws,
This thing as good, and that as fit, reſpect,
Deſign the end, and then the means elect?
Nature, you grant, can no event intend,
Yet that ſhe acts with prudence you pretend:
So Nature wiſely acts, yet acts without an end!
Yet while this Prince of ſcience does declare
That means or ends were never Nature's care,
That things, which ſeem with perfect art contriv'd,
By the reſiſtleſs force of fate arriv'd;
This cautious maſter, to ſecure his fame,
And 'ſcape the Atheiſt's ignominious name,
Did to his Gods of all degrees allow
Counſel, deſign, and power to chuſe and know.
Yet, ſince he 's pleas'd ſo plainly to aſſert,
His Gods no act of reaſoning power exert,
No mark of choice, or arbitrary will,
Employ'd no prudence, and expreſs'd no ſkill,
In making or directing Nature's frame,
Which from his fate inevitable came;

Theſe Gods muſt, as to us, be brute and blind,
And as unuſeful, as if void of mind:
Acting without intent, or care, or aim,
Can they our prayer regard, or praiſes claim?
Of all the irreligious in debate,
This ſhameful error is the common fate;
That though they cannot but diſtinctly ſee
In Nature's works, and whole œconomy,
Deſign and judgement in a high degree;
This judgement, this deſign, they ne'er allow
Do from a cauſe endued with reaſon flow.
The art they grant, th' artificer reject,
The ſtructure own, and not the architect;
That unwiſe Nature all things wiſely makes,
And prudent meaſures without prudence takes.
Grant that their admiration and their love
Of the firſt God may all th' inferior move;
Grant too, though no neceſſity appears,
That, with their rapture mov'd, they move their ſpheres:
Theſe queſtions let the Stagyrite reſolve,
Why they at all, why in this way, revolve?
Declare by what neceſſity control'd,
In one determin'd manner they are roll'd?
Why is their ſwift rotation weſt and eaſt,
Rather than north and ſouth, or eaſt and weſt?
Why do not all th' interior ſpheres obey
The higheſt ſphere's inevitable ſway?
Tell us, if all celeſtial motions riſe
From revolutions of the ſtarry ſkies,

Whence

Whence of the orbs the various motions come?
Why ſome the general road purſue? and ſome
In æther ſtray, and diſobedient roam?
If yours the ſource of motion is, declare,
Why this is fix'd, and that a wandering ſtar?
Tell by what fate, by what reſiſtleſs force,
This orb has one, and that another courſe?
How does the learned Greek the cauſe unfold
With equal ſwiftneſs why the ſun is roll'd
Still eaſt and weſt, to mark the night and day?
To form the year why through th' ecliptic way?
What magic, what neceſſity, confines
The ſolar orb between the tropic lines?
What charms in thoſe enchanted circles dwell,
That with controling power the ſun repel?
The Stagyrite to this no anſwer makes;
Of the vaſt globe ſo little thought he takes,
That he to ſolve theſe queſtions never ſtrives,
No cauſe or of its place or motion gives.
But farther yet, applauded Greek, ſuppoſe
Celeſtial motions from your ſpring aroſe;
That motion down to all the worlds below
From the firſt ſphere may propagated flow:
Since you of things to ſhow th' efficient ſource
Have always to neceſſity recourſe;
From what neceſſity do ſpheres proceed
With ſuch a meaſur'd, ſuch a certain ſpeed?
We fain would this myſterious cauſe explore,
Why motion was not either leſs or more,
But in this juſt proportion and degree,
As ſuits with Nature's juſt œconomy.

This is a cauſe, a right one too, we grant,
But 'tis the final, we th' efficient want;
With greater ſwiftneſs if the ſpheres were whirl'd,
The motion given to this inferior world
Too violent had been for Nature's uſe,
Of too great force mix'd bodies to produce;
The Elements, Air, Water, Earth, and Fire,
Which now to make compounded things conſpire,
By their rude ſhocks could never have combin'd,
Or had been diſengag'd as ſoon as join'd:
But then had motion in a leſs degree
Been given, than that which we in Nature ſee;
Of greater vigour ſhe had ſtood in need,
To mix and blend the elemental ſeed,
To temper, work, incorporate, and bind
Thoſe principles, that thence of every kind
The various compound beings might ariſe,
Which fill the earth and ſea, and ſtore the ſkies.
Say, what neceſſity, what fatal laws,
Did in ſuch due proportion motion cauſe,
Nor more or leſs, but juſt ſo much as tends
To frame the world, and ſerve all Nature's ends?
Aſk why the higheſt of the rolling ſpheres,
Deck'd to profuſion with refulgent ſtars,
And all with bright excreſcences emboſt,
Has the whole beauty of the heavens engroſt;
When of the others, to diſpel the night,
Each owns a ſingle ſolitary light;
Only one planet in a ſphere is found,
Marching in air his melancholy round:

Nature,

Nature, he tells us, took this prudent care,
That the ſublimeſt and the nobleſt ſphere
Should be with nobler decoration bleſt,
And in magnificence outſhine the reſt;
That ſo its greater ornament and ſtate
Should bear proportion with its greater height.
It ſeems then Nature does not only find
Means to be good, beneficent, and kind,
But has for beauty and for order car'd,
Does rank, and ſtate, and decency, regard.
Now, ſhould he not conſidering men forgive,
If, ſway'd by this aſſertion, they believe,
That Nature, which does decency reſpect,
Is ſomething, which can reaſon, chuſe, reflect?
Or that ſome wiſe Director muſt preſide
O'er Nature's works, and all her motions guide?
You here ſhould that neceſſity declare,
Why all the ſtars adorn the higheſt ſphere:
Say, how is this th' effect of fatal laws,
Without reflecting on a final cauſe?
One ſphere has all the ſtars; we aſk you, why?
When you to beauty and to order fly,
You plain aſſert the truth which you deny;
That is, that Nature has wiſe ends in view,
With foreſight works, and does deſigns purſue.
Thus all the mighty wits, that have eſſay'd
To explicate the means how things are made
By Nature's power, without the Hand Divine,
The final cauſes of effects aſſign.
They ſay, that this or that is ſo or ſo,
That ſuch events in ſuch ſucceſſion flow;

Becauſe convenience, decency, and uſe,
Require, that Nature things ſhould thus produce.
They in their demonſtrations always vaunt
Efficient cauſes, which they always want.
But thus they yield the queſtion in debate,
And grant the impotence of Chance and Fate:
For, till they ſhow by what neceſſity
Things have the diſpoſition which we ſee,
Whether it be deriv'd from Fate or Chance,
Not the leaſt ſtep in ſcience they advance.
Grant Nature furniſh'd, at her vaſt expence,
One room of ſtate with ſuch magnificence,
That it might ſhine above the others bright,
Adorn'd with numerous burniſh'd balls of light;
Does ſhe on one by decent rules diſpenſe
Of conſtellations ſuch a wealth immenſe,
While the next ſphere in amplitude and height
Rolls on with one erratic, lonely light?
But be it ſo, the queſtion 's ſtill the ſame,
Tell us, from what neceſſity it came?
Let us the great philoſopher attend,
While to the worlds below his thoughts deſcend.
His elements, earth, water, air, and fire,
He ſays, to make all compound things conſpire;
He in the midſt leaves the dull earth at reſt,
In the ſoft boſom of the air careſt;
The red-wing'd fire muſt to the moon ariſe,
Hover in air, and lick contiguous ſkies;
No charms, no force, can make the fire deſcend,
Nor can the earth to ſeats ſuperior tend,

Both

Both unmoleſted peace for ever own,
This in the middle, that beneath the moon:
Water and air not ſo; for they, by fate
Aſſign'd to conſtant duty, always wait;
Ready by turns to riſe or to deſcend,
Nature againſt a vacant to defend;
For ſhould a void her monarchy invade,
Should in her works the ſmalleſt breach be made,
That breach the mighty fabrick would diſſolve,
And in immediate ruin all involve.
A conſequence ſo diſmal to prevent,
Water and air are ſtill (as ſaid) intent
To mount or fall, this way or that to fly,
Seek ſubterranean vaults, or climb the ſky;
While theſe with ſo much duty are oppreſt,
The earth and fire are privileg'd with reſt.
Theſe elements, 'tis clear, have not diſcern'd
The intereſt of the whole, nor are concern'd
Leſt they, when once an interpoſing void
Has Nature's frame o'erturn'd, ſhould be deſtroy'd.
Tell, why theſe ſimple elements are four?
Why juſt ſo many! why not leſs or more?
Does this from pure neceſſity proceed?
Or ſay, does Nature juſt that number need?
If this, you mock us, and decline the taſk,
You give the final cauſe, when we th' efficient aſk.
If that, how often ſhall we call in vain
That you would this neceſſity explain?
But here forgive me, famous Stagyrite,
If I eſteem it idle to recite

The

The reaſons (ſo you call them) which you give,
To make us this neceſſity believe;
Reaſons ſo trifling, ſo abſurd, and dry,
That thoſe ſhould bluſh, who make a grave reply.
Your elements we grant: But now declare,
How you to form compounded things prepare,
And mix your fire and water, earth and air?
The ſwift rotation of the ſpheres above,
You ſay, muſt all inferior bodies move;
The elements in ſublunary ſpace
Are by this impulſe forc'd to leave their place;
By various agitations they combine
In different forms, by different mixtures join;
Blended and juſtly temper'd, they compound
All things in all th' inferior regions found:
Thus beings from th' incorporated four,
Reſult, by undeſigning Nature's power.
Hence metals, plants, and minerals ariſe,
The clouds, and all the meteors of the ſkies!
Hence all the clans that haunt the hill or wood,
That beat the air, or cut the limpid flood!
Ev'n man, their Lord, hence into being came,
Breath'd the pure air, and felt the vital flame!
Say, is not this a noble ſcheme, a piece
Worthy the Stagyrite, and worthy Greece?
But now, acute philoſopher, declare
How this rotation of the heavenly ſphere
Can mingle fire and water, earth and air?
The fire that dwells beneath the lunar ball,
To meet aſcending earth, muſt downward fall.

Now

Now turn your ſphere contiguous to the fire,
Will from its ſeat that element retire?
The ſphere could never drive its neighbour down,
But give a circling motion, like its own.
So give the air impreſſion from above,
It in a whirl vertiginous would move:
And thus the rolling ſpheres can ne'er diſplace
The fire or air, to make a mingled maſs:
The elements diſtinct might keep their ſeat,
Elude the ruffle, and your ſcheme defeat.
But ſince th' applauded author will demand
For complex bodies no director's hand;
Since art without an artiſt he maintains,
A building rears without a builder's pains;
He comes at length to Epicurus' ſcheme,
Pleas'd by his model compound works to frame.
One all his various atoms does unite
To form mixt things; the famous Stagyrite,
By his invented elements combin'd,
Compoſes beings of each different kind:
But both agree, while both alike deny
The Gods did e'er their care or thought apply
To form or rule this univerſal frame,
Which or from fate or caſual concourſe came.
Whether to raiſe the world you are inclin'd
By this man's chance, or that man's fate, as blind;
If ſtill mechanic, neceſſary laws
Of moving matter muſt all beings cauſe;
If artful works from a brute cauſe reſult,
From ſprings unknown, and qualities occult;
With ſchemes alike abſurd our reaſon you inſult.

And

And now, to finiſh this leſs pleaſant taſk,
Of our renown'd philoſopher we aſk,
How was the earth determin'd to its place?
Why did it firſt the middle point embrace?
What blandiſhments, what ſtrong attractive power,
What happy arts adapted to allure,
Were by that ſingle point of all the void
To captivate and charm the maſs employ'd?
Or what machines, what grapples, did it caſt
On earth, to fix it to the centre faſt?
But if the earth, by ſtrong enchantment caught,
This point of all the vacant fondly ſought,
Since it is unintelligent and blind,
Could it the way, the neareſt could it find?
When at that point arriv'd, how did it know
It was arriv'd, and ſhould no farther go?
When in a globous form collected there,
What wondrous cement made the parts cohere?
Why did the orb ſuſpended there remain
Fix'd and unmov'd? what does its weight ſuſtain?
Tell what its fall prevents; can liquid air
The ponderous pile on its weak columns bear?
The earth muſt, in its gravity's deſpight,
Uphold itſelf; our careleſs Stagyrite
For its ſupport has no proviſion made,
No pillar rear'd, and no foundation laid:
When by occult and unknown gravity
'Tis to its ſtation brought, it there muſt lie
In undiſturb'd repoſe; in vain we aſk him, why?
Say, if the world uncaus'd did ne'er begin,
If Nature what it is has always been;

Why

Why do no arms the poet's ſong employ
Before the Theban war, or ſiege of Troy?
And why no elder hiſtories relate
The riſe of empires, and the turns of ſtate?
If generations infinite are gone,
Tell, why ſo late were arts and letters known?
Their riſe and progreſs is of recent date,
And ſtill we mourn their young imperfect ſtate.
If unconfin'd duration we regard,
And time be with eternity compar'd,
But yeſterday the ſages of the Eaſt
Firſt ſome crude knowledge of the ſtars expreſt.
In ſacred emblems Egypt's ſons conceal'd
Their myſtic learning, rather than reveal'd.
Greece after this, for ſubtle wit renown'd,
The ſciences and arts improv'd or found;
Firſt, cauſes ſearch'd, and Nature's ſecret ways;
Firſt taught the bards to ſing immortal lays;
The charms of muſick and of painting rais'd,
And was for building firſt, and firſt for ſculpture prais'd.
Man in mechanic arts did late excel,
That ſuccour life, and noxous power repel;
Which yield ſupplies for neceſſary uſe,
Or which to pleaſure or to pomp conduce.
How late was found the loadſtone's magic force,
That ſeeks the north, and guides the ſailor's courſe!
How newly did the printer's curious ſkill
Th' enlighten'd world with letter'd volumes fill!
But late the kindled powder did explode
The maſſy ball, and the braſs tube unload;

The tube, to whoſe loud thunder Albion owes
The laurel honours that adorn her brows;
Which awful, during eight renown'd campaigns,
From Belgia's hills, and Gallia's frontier plains,
Did through th' admiring realms around proclaim
Marlborough's ſwift conqueſts, and great Anna's name!
By this the leader of the Britiſh powers
Shook Menin, Lilla, and high Ganda's towers;
Next his wide engines level'd Tournay's pride,
Whoſe lofty walls advancing foes defy'd;
Though nitrous tempeſts, and clandeſtine death,
Fill'd the deep caves and numerous vaults beneath,
Which, form'd with art, and wrought with endleſs toil,
Ran through the faithleſs excavated ſoil.
See, the intrepid Briton delves his way,
And to the caverns lets in war and day;
Quells ſubterraneaan foes, and riſes crown'd
With ſpoils, from martial labour under ground.
Mons, to reward Blarignia's glorious field,
To Marlborough's terrors did ſubmiſſive yield.
The hero next aſſail'd proud Doway's head;
And ſpite of confluent inundations ſpread
Around, in ſpite of works for ſure defence
Rais'd with conſummate art, and coſt immenſe,
With unexampled valour did ſucceed:
(Villars, thy hoſt beheld the hardy deed!)
Aria, Venantia, Bethune, and Bouchain,
Of his long triumphs cloſe th' illuſtrious train.
While thus his thunder did his wrath declare,
And artful lightnings flaſh'd along the air,

Somona's caſtles with th' impetuous roar
Aſtoniſh'd tremble, but their warriors more;
Lutetia's lofty towers with terror ſtruck
Caught the contagion, and at diſtance ſhook.
Tell, Gallic chiefs, for you have often heard
His dreadful cannon, and his fire rever'd,
Tell, how you rag'd, when your pale cohorts run
From Marlborough's ſword, the battle ſcarce begun.
Tell, Scaldis! Legia, tell! how to their head
Your frighted waves in refluent errors fled.
While Marlborough's cannon thus prevails by land,
Britain's ſea-chiefs, by Anna's high command,
Reſiſtleſs o'er the Thuſcan billows ride,
And ſtrike rebellowing caves on either ſide;
Their ſulphur tempeſts ring from ſhore to ſhore,
Now make the Ligur ſtart, and now the Moor.
Hark how the ſound diſturbs imperious Rome,
Shakes her proud hills, and rolls from dome to dome!
Her mitred princes hear the echoing noiſe,
And, Albion, dread thy wrath, and awful voice.
Aided by thee, the Auſtrian eagles riſe
Sublime, and triumph in Iberian ſkies.
What panic fear, what anguiſh, what diſtreſs,
What conſternation, Gallia's ſons expreſs,
While, trembling on the coaſt, they from afar
View the wing'd terrors, and the floating war!

CREATION.

BOOK VI.

THE ARGUMENT.

The fabulous account of the firſt riſe of mankind given by the ancient poets. The opinions of many of the Greek philoſophers concerning that point not leſs ridiculous. The aſſertion of Epicurus and his followers, that our firſt parents were the ſpontaneous production of the earth, moſt abſurd and incredible. The true origin of man enquired into. He is proved to be at firſt created by an intelligent, arbitrary cauſe; from the characters and impreſſions of contrivance, art, and wiſdom, which appear in his formation. The wonderful progreſs of it. The figure, ſituation, and connexion, of the bones. The ſyſtem of the veins, and that of the arteries. The manner of the circulation of the blood deſcribed. Nutrition how performed. The ſyſtem of the nerves. Of the animal ſpirits, how made, and how employed in muſcular motion and ſenſation. A wiſe intelligent cauſe inferred from theſe appearances.

THE

THE pagan world, to Canaan's realms unknown,
Where knowledge reign'd, and light celeſtial ſhone,
Loſt by degrees their parent Adam's name,
Forgot their ſtock, and wonder'd whence they came:
Unguided, in the dark they ſtrove to find,
With fruitleſs toil, the ſource of human kind.
The heathen bards, who idle fables dreſt,
Illuſive dreams in myſtic verſe expreſs'd,
And, foes to natural ſcience and divine,
In beauteous phraſe made impious notions ſhine,
In ſtrains ſublime their different fictions ſung,
Whence the firſt parents of our ſpecies ſprung.
Prometheus (ſo ſome elder poets ſay)
Temper'd and form'd a paſte of purer clay,
To which, well mingled with the river's ſtream,
His artful hand gave human ſhape and frame;
Then, with warm life his figures to inſpire,
The bold projector ſtole celeſtial fire.
While others tell us how the human brood
Ow'd their production to the fruitful wood;
How from the laurel and the aſh they ſprung,
And infants on the oak, like acorns hung:
The crude conceptions preſt the bending trees,
Till cheriſh'd by the ſun-beams, by degrees,
Ripe children dropp'd on all the ſoil around,
Peopled the woods, and overſpread the ground.
Great Jupiter (ſo ſome were pleas'd to ſing)
Of fabled gods the father and the king,

The moving prayer of Æacus did grant,
And into men and women turn'd the ant.
  Some tell, Deucalion and his Pyrrha threw
Obdurate ſtones, which o'er their ſhoulders flew,
Then ſhifting ſhape receiv'd a vital flame,
And men and women (wondrous change!) became.
And thus the hard and ſtubborn race of man
From animated rock and flint began.
  Now to the learned ſchools of Greece repair,
Who Chance the author of the world declare:
Then judge if wiſe philoſophers excel
Thoſe idle tales, which wanton poets tell.
  They ſay, at firſt to living things the earth
At her formation gave ſpontaneous birth;
When youthful heat was through the glebe diffus'd,
Mankind, as well as inſects, ſhe produc'd;
That genial wombs by parent Chance were form'd
Adapted to the ſoil, which, after warm'd
And cheriſh'd by the ſun's enlivening beam,
With human offſprings did in embryo teem;
Theſe nouriſh'd there a while impriſon'd lay,
Then broke their yielding bands, and forc'd their way;
The field a crop of reaſoning creatures crown'd,
And crying infants grovel'd on the ground;
A milky ſhore was by the mother earth
Pour'd from her boſom, to ſuſtain the birth;
In ſtrength and bulk increas'd, the earth-born race
Could move, and walk, and ready change their place,
O'er every hill and verdant paſture ſtray,
Skip o'er the lawns, and by the rivers play,

Could

Could eat the tender plant, and by degrees
Browſe on the ſhrubs, and crop the budding trees;
The fragrant fruit from bending branches ſhake,
And with the cryſtal ſtream their thirſt at pleaſure ſlake.
The earth by theſe applauded ſchools, 'tis ſaid,
This ſingle drop of men and women bred;
Who grown adult (ſo Chance it ſeems enjoin'd)
Did male and female propagate their kind.
This wiſe account Lucretian ſages give,
Whence our firſt parents their deſcent derive.
Severely on this ſubject to diſpute,
And tales ſo wild, ſo ſenſeleſs, to confute,
Were with inglorious labour to diſgrace
The ſchools, and reaſon's dignity debaſe.
But ſince, with this of man's original,
The parts remaining of their ſcheme muſt fall
(Yet farther to purſue the preſent theme),
Behold how vain philoſophers may dream.
Grant, Epicurus, that by caſual birth
Men ſprung ſpontaneous from the fruitful earth.
When on the glebe the naked infants lay,
How were the helpleſs creatures fed? You ſay,
The teeming ſoil did from its breaſts exude
A ſoft and milky liquor for their food
I will not aſk what this apt humour made,
Nor by what wondrous channels 'twas convey'd;
For, if we ſuch enquiries make, we know
Your ſhort reply, It happen'd to be ſo:
Without aſſigning once a proper cauſe,
Or ſolving queſtions by mechanic laws,

To every doubt your anſwer is the ſame,
It ſo fell out, and ſo by chance it came.
How ſhall the new-born race their food command,
Who cannot change their place, or move a hand?
Grant that the glebe beneath will never drink,
Nor through its pores let the ſoft humour ſink;
Will not the ſun with his exhaling ray
Defraud the babe, and draw his food away?
Since for ſo long a ſpace the human birth
Muſt lie expos'd and naked on the earth;
Say, could the tender creature, in deſpight
Of heat by day, and chilling dews by night,
In ſpite of thunder, winds, and hail, and rain,
And all inclement air, its life maintain?
In vain, you ſay, in earth's primæval ſtate,
Soft was the air, and mild the cold and heat;
For did not then the night ſucceed the day?
The ſun as now roll through its annual way?
Th' effects then on the air muſt be the ſame,
The froſts of winter, and the ſummer's flame.
In the firſt age, you ſay, the pregnant ground
With human kind in embryo did abound,
And pour'd her offspring on the ſoil around.
But tell us, Epicurus, why the field
Did never ſince one human harveſt yield?
And why we never ſee one ripening birth
Heave in the glebe, and ſtruggle through the earth?
You ſay, that, when the earth was freſh and young,
While her prolific energy was ſtrong,
A race of men ſhe in her boſom bred,
And all the fields with infant people ſpread:

But

But that firſt birth her ſtrength did ſo exhauſt,
The genial mother ſo much vigour loſt,
That, waſted now by age, in vain we hope
She ſhould again bring forth a human crop.
Mean time, ſhe's not with labour ſo much worn,
But ſhe can ſtill the hills with woods adorn.
See, from her fertile boſom how ſhe pours
Verdant conceptions, and, refreſh'd with ſhowers,
Covers the field with corn, and paints the mead with flowers.
See, her tall ſons, the cedar, oak, and pine,
The fragrant myrtle, and the juicy vine,
Their parent's undecaying ſtrength declare,
Which with freſh labour, and unwearied care,
Supplies new plants, her loſſes to repair.
Then, ſince the earth retains her fruitful power
To procreate plants, the foreſt to reſtore;
Say, why to nobler animals alone
Should ſhe be feeble, and unfruitful grown?
After one birth ſhe ceas'd not to be young,
The glebe was ſucculent, the mould was ſtrong.
Could ſhe at once fade in her perfect bloom,
Waſte all her ſpirits, and her wealth conſume?
Grant that her vigour might in part decreaſe,
From like productions muſt ſhe ever ceaſe?
To form a race ſhe might have ſtill inclin'd,
Though of a monſtrous, or a dwarfiſh, kind.
Why did ſhe never, by one crude eſſay,
Imperfect lines and rudiments diſplay?
In ſome ſucceeding ages had been found
A leg or arm unfiniſh'd in the ground;

And ſometimes in the fields might ploughing ſwains
Turn up ſoft bones, and break unfaſhion'd veins.
But grant the earth was laviſh of her power,
And ſpent at once her whole prolific ſtore;
Would not ſo long a reſt new vigour give,
And all her firſt fertility revive?
Learn, Epicurus, of th' experienc'd ſwain,
When frequent wounds have worn th' impoveriſh'd plain:
Let him a while the furrow not moleſt,
But leave the glebe to heavenly dews and reſt:
If then he till and ſow the harrow'd field,
Will not the ſoil a plenteous harveſt yield?
The ſun, by you, Lucretius, is aſſign'd
The other parent of all human kind,
But does he ever languiſh or decay?
Does he not equal influence diſplay,
And pierce the plains with the ſame active ray?
If then the glebe, warm'd with the ſolar flame,
Men once produc'd, it ſtill ſhould do the ſame
You ſay, the ſun's prolific beams can form
Th' induſtrious ant, the gaudy fly, and worm;
Can make each plant, and tree, the gardener's care,
Beſide their leaves, their proper inſects bear:
Then might the Heavens, in ſome peculiar ſtate,
Or lucky aſpect, beaſts and men create.
But late enquirers by their glaſſes find,
That every inſect of each different kind,
In its own egg, cheer'd by the ſolar rays,
Organs involv'd and latent life diſplays:
This truth, diſcover'd by ſagacious art,
Does all Lucretian arrogance ſubvert.

Proud

Proud wits, your frenzy own, and, overcome
By reaſon's force, be now for ever dumb.
If, learned Epicurus, we allow
Our race to earth primæval being owe,
How did ſhe male and female ſexes frame?
Say, if from fortune this diſtinction came?
Or did the conſcious parent then foreſee
By one conception ſhe ſhould barren be,
And therefore, wiſely provident, deſign'd
Prolific pairs to propagate the kind;
That, thus preſerv'd, the godlike race of man
Might not expire ere yet it ſcarce began?
Since, by theſe various arguments, 'tis clear
The teeming mould did not our parents bear;
By more ſevere enquiries let us trace
The origin and ſource of human race.
I think, I move, I therefore know I am;
While I have been, I ſtill have been the ſame,
Since, from an infant, I a man became.
But though I am, few circling years are gone,
Since I in Nature's roll was quite unknown.
Then, ſince 'tis plain I have not always been,
I aſk, from whence my being could begin?
I did not to myſelf exiſtence give,
Nor from myſelf the ſecret power receive,
By which I reaſon, and by which I live.
I did not build this frame, nor do I know
The hidden ſprings from whence my motions flow.
If I had form'd myſelf, I had deſign'd
A ſtronger body, and a wiſer mind,

From ſorrow free, nor liable to pain;
My paſſions ſhould obey, and reaſon reign.
Nor could my being from my parents flow,
Who neither did the parts or ſtructure know,
Did not my mind or body underſtand,
My ſex determine, nor my ſhape command:
Had they deſign'd and rais'd the curious frame,
Inſpir'd my branching veins with vital flame,
Faſhion'd the heart, and hollow channels made,
Through which the circling ſtreams of life are play'd;
Had they the organs of my ſenſes wrought,
And form'd the wondrous principle of thought;
Their artful work they muſt have better known,
Explain'd its ſprings, and its contrivance ſhown.
If they could make, they might preſerve me too,
Prevent my fears, or diſſipate my woe.
When long in ſickneſs languiſhing I lay,
They with compaſſion touch'd did mourn and pray;
To ſooth my pain, and mitigate my grief,
They ſaid kind things, yet brought me no relief.
But whatſoever cauſe my being gave,
The Power that made me can its creature ſave.
If to myſelf I did not being give,
Nor from immediate parents did receive;
It could not from my predeceſſors flow,
They, than my parents, could not more beſtow.
Should we the long depending ſcale aſcend
Of ſons and fathers, will it never end?
If 'twill, then muſt we through the order run
To ſome one man, whoſe being ne'er begun:

If

If that one man was ſempiternal, why
Did he, ſince independent, ever die?
If from himſelf his own exiſtence came,
The cauſe, that could deſtroy his being, name.
To ſeek my Maker, thus in vain I trace
The whole ſucceſſive chain of human race.
Bewilder'd I my Author cannot find,
Till ſome Firſt Cauſe, ſome Self-exiſtent Mind,
Who form'd, and rules all Nature, is aſſign'd.
When firſt the womb did the crude embryo hold,
What ſhap'd the parts? what did the limbs unfold?
O'er the whole work in ſecret did preſide,
Give quickening vigour, and each motion guide?
What kindled in the dark the vital flame,
And, ere the heart was form'd, puſh'd on the reddening ſtream?
Then for the heart the apteſt fibres ſtrung?
And in the breaſt th' impulſive engine hung?
Say, what the various bones ſo wiſely wrought?
How was their frame to ſuch perfection brought?
What did their figures for their uſes fit,
Their number fix, and joints adapted knit;
And made them all in that juſt order ſtand,
Which motion, ſtrength, and ornament, demand?
What for the ſinews ſpun ſo ſtrong a thread,
The curious loom to weave the muſcles ſpread?
Did the nice ſtrings of tended membranes drill,
And perforate the nerve with ſo much ſkill,
Then with the active ſtream the dark receſſes fill?
The purple mazes of the veins diſplay'd,
And all th' arterial pipes in order laid,

What

What gave the bounding current to the blood,
And to and fro convey'd the reſtleſs flood?
The living fabrick now in pieces take,
Of every part due obſervation make;
All which ſuch art diſcover, ſo conduce
To beauty, vigour, and each deſtin'd uſe;
The Atheiſt, if to ſearch for truth inclin'd,
May in himſelf his full conviction find,
And from his body teach his erring mind.
When the crude embryo careful Nature breeds,
See how ſhe works, and how her work proceeds;
While through the maſs her energy ſhe darts,
To free and ſwell the complicated parts,
Which only does unravel and untwiſt
Th' invelop'd limbs, that previous there exiſt.
And as each vital ſpeck, in which remains
Th' entire, but rumpled animal, contains
Organs perplext, and clues of twining veins;
So every fœtus bears a ſecret hoard,
With ſleeping, unexpanded iſſue ſtor'd;
Which numerous, but unquicken'd progeny,
Claſp'd and inwrap'd within each other lie:
Engendering heats theſe one by one unbind,
Stretch their ſmall tubes, and hamper'd nerves unwind:
And thus, when time ſhall drain each magazine
Crowded with men unborn, unripe, unſeen,
Nor yet of parts unfolded; no increaſe
Can follow, all prolific power muſt ceaſe.
Th' elaſtic ſpirits, which remain at reſt
In the ſtrait lodgings of the brain compreſt,

While

While by the ambient womb's enlivening heat
Cheer'd and awaken'd, firſt themſelves dilate;
Then quicken'd and expanded every way
The genial labourers all their force diſplay:
They now begin to work the wondrous frame,
To ſhape the parts, and raiſe the vital flame;
For when th' extended fibres of the brain
Their active gueſts no longer can reſtrain,
They backward ſpring, which due effort compels
The labouring ſpirits to forſake their cells;
The ſpirits, thus exploded from their ſeat,
Swift from the head to the next parts retreat,
Force their admiſſion, and their paſſage beat;
Their tours around th' unopen'd maſs they take,
And by a thouſand ways their inroads make,
Till there reſiſted they their race inflect,
And backward to their ſource their way direct.
Thus with a ſteady and alternate toil
They iſſue from, and to the head recoil;
By which their plaſtic function they diſcharge,
Extend their channels, and their tracks enlarge;
For, by the ſwift excurſions which they make,
Still ſallying from the brain, and leaping back,
They pierce the nervous fibre, bore the vein,
And ſtretch th' arterial channels, which contain
The various ſtreams of life, that to and fro
Through dark meanders undirected flow;
Th' inſpected egg this gradual change betrays,
To which the brooding hen expanding heat conveys.
The beating heart, demanded firſt for uſe,
Is the firſt muſcle nature does produce:

By this impulſive engine's conſtant aid
The tepid floods are every way convey'd;
And did not Nature's care at firſt provide
The active heart, to puſh the circling tide,
All progreſs to her work would be denied.
The ſalient point, ſo firſt is call'd the heart,
Shap'd and ſuſpended with amazing art,
By turns dilated, and by turns compreſt,
Expels and entertains the purple gueſt:
It ſends from out its left contracted ſide
Into th' arterial tube its vital pride;
Which tube, prolong'd but little from its ſource,
Parts its wide trunk, and takes a double courſe.
One channel to the head its way directs,
One to th' inferior limbs its path inflects:
Both ſmaller by degrees, and ſmaller grow,
And on the parts, through which they branching go,
A thouſand ſecret, ſubtle pipes beſtow;
From which by numerous convolutions wound,
Wrapt with th' attending nerve, and twiſted round,
The complicated knots and kernels riſe,
Of various figures, and of various ſize.
Th' arterial ducts, when thus involv'd, produce
Unnumber'd glands, and of important uſe;
But after, as they farther progreſs make,
The appellation of a vein they take;
For though th' arterial pipes themſelves extend
In ſmalleſt branches, yet they never end;
The ſame continued circling channels run
Back to the heart, where firſt their courſe begun.

The

The heart, as ſaid, from its contractive cave
On the left ſide, ejects the bounding wave;
Exploded thus, as ſplitting channels lead,
Upward it ſprings, or downward is convey'd;
The crimſon jets with force elaſtic thrown
Aſcend, and climb the mind's imperial throne;
Arterial ſtreams through the ſoft brain diffuſe,
And water all its fields with vital dews:
From this o'erflowing tide the curious brain
Does through its pores the purer ſpirits ſtrain;
Which to its inmoſt ſeats their paſſage make,
Whence their dark riſe th' extended ſinews take;
With all their mouths the nerves theſe ſpirits drink,
Which through the cells of the fine ſtrainer ſink;
Theſe all the channel'd fibres every way
For motion and ſenſation ſtill convey.
The greateſt portion of th' arterial blood,
By the cloſe ſtructure of the parts withſtood,
Whoſe narrow meſhes ſtop the groſſer flood,
By apt canals and furrows in the brain,
Which here diſcharge the office of a vein,
Invert their current, and the heart regain.
The ſhooting ſtreams, which through another road
The beating engine downward did explode,
To all th' inferior parts deſcend, and lave
The members with their circulating wave:
To make th' arterial treaſure move as ſlow,
As nature's ends demand, the channels grow
Still more contracted, as they farther go:
Beſides, the glands, which o'er the body ſpread
Fine complicated clues of nervous thread,

Involv'd and twisted with th' arterial duct,
The rapid motion of the blood obstruct:
These labyrinths the circling current stay
For noble ends, which after we display.
Soon as the blood has past the winding ways,
And various turnings of the wondrous maze,
From the entangled knot of vessels freed,
It runs its vital race with greater speed;
And from the parts and members most remote
By these canals the streams are backward brought,
Which are of thinner coats and fewer fibres wrought;
Till all the confluent rills their current join,
And in the ample Porta vein combine.
This larger channel by a thousand roads
Enters the liver, and its store unloads;
Which from that store by proper inlets strains
The yellow dregs, and sends them by the veins
To the large cistern, which the gall contains;
Then to the vein, we Cava name, the blood
Calls in the scatter'd streams, and re-collects the flood.
As when the Thames advances through the plain,
With his fresh waters to dilute the main;
He turns and winds amidst the flowery meads,
And now contracts, and now his waters spreads;
Here in a course direct he forward tends,
There to his head his waves retorted bends:
See, now the sportive flood in two divides
His silver train, now with uniting tides
He wanton clasps the intercepted soil,
And forms with erring streams the reedy isle;
At length collecting all his watery band,
The ocean to augment he leaves the land.

So

So the red currents in their ſecret maze
In various rounds through dark meanders paſs,
Till all, aſſembled in the Cava vein,
Bring to the heart's right ſide their crimſon train,
Which now compreſt with force elaſtic drives
The flood, that through the ſecret paſſes ſtrives;
The road that to the lungs this ſtore tranſmits
Into unnumber'd narrow channels ſplits;
The venal blood crowds through the winding ways,
And through the tubes the broken tide conveys;
Thoſe numerous ſtreams, their roſy beauty gone,
Poor by expence, and faint with labour grown,
Are in the lungs enrich'd, which reinſpire
The languid liquors, and reſtore their fire.
The large arterial ducts that thither lead,
By which the blood is from the heart convey'd,
Through either lobe ten thouſand branches ſpread.
Here its bright ſtream the bounding current parts,
And through the various paſſes ſwiftly darts,
Each ſubtle pipe, each winding channel, fills
With ſprightly liquors, and with purple rills;
The pipe, diſtinguiſh'd by its griſtly rings,
To cheriſh life aërial paſture brings,
Which the ſoft breathing lungs with gentle force
Conſtant embrace by turns, by turns divorce;
The ſpringy air this nitrous food impells
Through all the ſpungy parts and bladder'd cells,
And with dilating breath the vital bellows ſwells;
Th' admitted nitre agitates the flood,
Revives its fire, and re-ferments the blood.

Behold,

Behold, the ſtreams now change their languid blue,
Regain their glory, and their flame renew;
With ſcarlet honours re-adorn'd, the tide
Leaps on, and, bright with more than Tyrian pride,
Advances to the heart, and fills the cave
On the left ſide, which the firſt motion gave;
Now through the ſame involv'd arterial ways,
Again th' exploded jets th' impulſive engine plays.
No ſons of wiſdom could this current trace,
Or of th' Ionic, or Italic race:
From thee, Democritus, it lay conceal'd,
Though yielding nature much to thee reveal'd;
Though with the curious knife thou didſt invade
Her dark receſſes, and haſt oft' diſplay'd
The crimſon mazes, and the hollow road,
Which to the heart conveys the refluent blood.
It was to thee, great Stagyrite, unknown,
And thy Preceptor of divine renown.
Learning did ne'er this ſecret truth impart
To the Greek maſters of the healing art.
'Twas by the Coan's piercing eye unview'd,
And did attentive Galen's ſearch elude.
Thou, wondrous Harvey! whoſe immortal fame,
By thee inſtructed, grateful ſchools proclaim;
Thou, Albion's pride, didſt firſt the winding way,
And circling life's dark labyrinth diſplay;
Attentive from the heart thou didſt purſue
The ſtarting flood, and keep it ſtill in view;
Till thou with rapture ſaw'ſt the channels bring
The purple currents back, and form the vital ring.

See,

See, how the human animal is fed,
How nouriſhment is wrought, and how convey'd:
The mouth, with proper faculties endued,
Firſt entertains, and then divides the food;
Two adverſe rows of teeth the meat prepare,
On which the glands fermenting juice confer;
Nature has various tender muſcles plac'd,
By which the artful gullet is embrac'd;
Some the long funnel's curious mouth extend
Through which ingeſted meats with eaſe deſcend;
Other confederate pairs for nature's uſe
Contract the fibres, and the twitch produce,
Which gently puſhes on the grateful food
To the wide ſtomach, by its hollow road;
That this long road may unobſtructed go,
As it deſcends, it bores the midriff through;
The large receiver for concoction made
Behold amidſt the warmeſt bowels laid;
The ſpleen to this, and to the adverſe ſide
The glowing liver's comfort is apply'd;
Beneath, the pancreas has its proper ſeat,
To cheer its neighbour, and augment its heat;
More to aſſiſt it for its deſtin'd uſe,
This ample bag is ſtor'd with active juice,
Which can with eaſe ſubdue, with eaſe unbind,
Admitted meats of every different kind;
This powerful ferment, mingling with the parts,
The leaven'd maſs to milky chyle converts;
The ſtomach's fibres this concocted food,
By their contraction's gentle force, exclude,

Which by the mouth on the right ſide deſcends
Through the wide paſs, which from that mouth depends;
In its progreſſion ſoon the labour'd chyle
Receives the confluent rills of bitter bile,
Which by the liver ſever'd from the blood,
And ſtriving through the gall-pipe, here unload
Their yellow ſtreams, more to refine the flood;
The complicated glands, in various ranks
Diſpos'd along the neighbouring channel's banks,
By conſtant weeping mix their watery ſtore
With the chyle's current, and dilute it more;
Th' inteſtine roads, inflected and inclin'd,
In various convolutions turn and wind,
That theſe meanders may the progreſs ſtay,
And the deſcending chyle by this delay
May through the milky veſſels find its way,
Whoſe little mouths in the large channel's ſide
Suck-in the flood, and drink the cheering tide:
Theſe numerous veins (ſuch is the curious frame!)
Receive the pure infinuating ſtream;
But no corrupt or dreggy parts admit,
To form the blood, or feed the limbs unfit,
Th' inteſtine ſpiral fibres theſe protrude,
And from the winding tubes at length exclude.
  Obſerve, theſe ſmall canals conſpire to make
With all their treaſure one capacious lake,
Whoſe common receptacle entertains
Th' united ſtreams of all the lacteal veins.
Hither the rills of water are convey'd
In curious aquæducts by nature laid,

To

To carry all the limpid humour ſtrain'd,
And from the blood divided by the gland;
Which mingling currents with the milky juice
Makes it more apt to flow, more fit for uſe;
Theſe liquors, which the wide receiver fill,
Prepar'd with labour, and refin'd with ſkill,
Another courſe to diſtant parts begin,
Through roads that ſtretch along the back within;
This uſeful channel, lately known, aſcends,
And in the vein near the left ſhoulder ends,
Which there unloads its wealth, that with the blood
Now flows in one incorporated flood;
Soon by the vein 'tis to the heart convey'd,
And is by that elaſtic engine play'd
Into the lungs, whence, as deſcrib'd before,
It onward ſprings, and makes the wondrous tour.
  Now all the banks the branching river laves
With dancing ſtreams, and animated waves;
New florid honours and gay youth beſtows,
Diffuſing vital vigour, where it flows;
Supplies freſh ſpirits to the living frame,
And kindles in the eyes a brighter flame;
Muſcles impair'd receive new fibrous thread,
And every bone is with rich marrow fed;
Nature revives, cheer'd with the wealthy tide,
And life regal'd diſplays its purple pride.
  But how the wondrous diſtribution 's made,
How to each part its proper food convey'd;
How fibrous ſtrings for nouriſhment are wrought,
By what conveyance to the muſcles brought;

How rang'd for motion, how for beauty mix'd;
With vital cement how th' extremes are fix'd;
How they agree in various ways to join
In a tranſverſe, a ſtraight, and crooked line;
Here loſt in wonder we adoring ſtand,
With rapture own the wiſe Director's hand,
Who Nature made, and does her works command.
Let us howe'er the theme as far purſue,
As learn'd obſervers know, or think they do.
Mixt with the blood in the ſame circling tide,
The rills nutritious through the veſſels glide:
Thoſe pipes, ſtill leſſening as they further paſs,
Retard the progreſs of the flowing maſs.
The glands, that Nature o'er the body ſpreads,
All artful knots of various hollow threads,
Which lymphæducts, an artery, nerve, and vein,
Involv'd and cloſe together wound, contain,
Make yet the motion of the ſtreams more ſlow,
Which through thoſe mazes intricate muſt flow:
And hence it comes the interrupted blood
Diſtends its channels with its ſwelling flood;
Thoſe channels, turgid with th' obſtructed tide,
Stretch their ſmall holes, and make their meſhes wide,
By ſkillful Nature pierc'd on every ſide.
Meantime, the labour'd chyle pervades the pores
In all th' arterial perforated ſhores;
The liquid food, which through thoſe paſſes ſtrives,
To every part juſt reparation gives;
Through holes of various figures various juice
Inſinuates, to ſerve for Nature's uſe.

See,

See, ſofter fibres to the fleſh are ſent,
While the thin membrane finer ſtrings augment:
The tough and ſtrong are on the ſinews laid,
And to the bones the harder are convey'd;
But what the maſs nutritious does divide,
To different parts the different portions guide,
What makes them aptly to the limbs adhere,
In youth augment them, and in age repair,
The deepeſt ſearch could never yet declare.
Nor leſs contrivance, nor leſs curious art,
Surprize and pleaſe in every other part.
See, how the nerves, with equal wiſdom made,
Ariſing from the tender brain, pervade
And ſecret paſs in pairs the channel'd bone,
And thence advance through paths and roads unknown;
Form'd of the fineſt complicated thread,
Theſe numerous cords are through the body ſpread;
A thouſand branches from each trunk they ſend,
Some to the limbs, ſome to the bowels tend;
Some in ſtrait lines, ſome in tranſverſe, are found,
One forms a crooked figure, one a round;
The entrails theſe embrace in ſpiral ſtrings,
Thoſe claſp th' arterial tubes in tender rings;
The tendons ſome compacted cloſe produce,
And ſome thin fibres for the ſkin diffuſe.
Theſe ſubtle channels (ſuch is every nerve!)
For vital functions, ſenſe, and motion ſerve;
Included ſpirits through their ſecret road
Paſs to and fro, as through the veins the blood;
Some to the heart advancing take their way,
Which move and make the beating muſcle play;

Part to the ſpleen, part to the liver, flows,
Theſe to the lungs, and to the ſtomach thoſe;
They help to labour and concoct the food,
Refine the chyle, and animate the blood;
Exalt the ferments, and the ſtrainers aid,
That, by a conſtant ſeparation made,
They may a due œconomy maintain,
Exclude the noxious parts, the good retain.
Yet we theſe wondrous functions ne'er perceive,
Functions, by which we move, by which we live;
Unconſcious we theſe motions never heed,
Whether they err, or by juſt laws proceed.
But other ſpirits, govern'd by the will,
Shoot through their tracks, and diſtant muſcles fill:
This Sovereign by his arbitrary nod
Reſtrains, or ſends his miniſters abroad;
Swift and obedient to his high command,
They ſtir a finger, or they lift a hand;
They tune our voices, or they move our eyes;
By theſe we walk, or from the ground ariſe;
By theſe we turn, by theſe the body bend;
Contract a limb at pleaſure, or extend:
And though theſe ſpirits, which obſequious go,
Know not the paths through which they ready flow,
Nor can our mind inſtruct them in their way,
Of all their roads as ignorant as they;
Yet ſeldom erring they attain their end,
And reach that ſingle part, which we intend;
Unguided they a juſt diſtinction make,
This muſcle ſwell, and leave the other ſlack;

And when their force this limb or that inflects,
Our will the meaſure of that force directs;
The ſpirits which diſtend them, as we pleaſe,
Exert their power, or from their duty ceaſe.
Theſe out-guards of the mind are ſent abroad,
And ſtill patrolling beat the neighbouring road;
Or to the parts remote obedient fly,
Keep poſts advanc'd, and on the frontier lie.
The watchful centinels at every gate,
At every paſſage to the ſenſes wait;
Still travel to and fro the nervous way,
And their impreſſions to the brain convey,
Where their report the vital envoys make,
And with new orders are remanded back;
Quick, as a darted beam of light, they go,
Through different paths to different organs flow,
Whence they reflect as ſwiftly to the brain,
To give it pleaſure, or to give it pain.
Thus has the Muſe a daring wing diſplay'd,
Through trackleſs ſkies ambitious flight eſſay'd,
To ſing the wonders of the human frame;
But, oh! bewails her weak, unequal flame.
Ye ſkilful maſters of Machaon's race,
Who Nature's mazy intricacies trace,
And to ſublimer ſpheres of knowledge riſe
By manag'd fire, and late-invented eyes;
Tell, how your ſearch has here eluded been,
How oft' amaz'd and raviſh'd you have ſeen
The conduct, prudence, and ſtupendous art,
And maſter-ſtrokes in each mechanic part.

Tell, what delightful myſteries remain
Unſung, which my inferior voice diſdain.
Who can this field of miracles ſurvey,
And not with Galen all in rapture ſay,
Behold a God, adore him, and obey!

CREATION.

BOOK VII.

THE ARGUMENT.

THE Introduction, in imitation of King Solomon's ironical conceſſions to the Libertine. The Creator aſſerted, from the contemplation of animals. Of their ſenſe of hearing, taſting, ſmelling, and eſpecially of ſeeing. Of the nobler operations of animals, commonly called inſtincts. The Creator demonſtrated farther, from the contemplation of human underſtanding, and the perfections of the mind. The vigour and ſwiftneſs of Thought. Simple perception. Reflexion. Of the mind's power of abſtracting, uniting, and ſeparating ideas. Of the faculty of reaſoning, or deducing one propoſition from two others. The power of human underſtanding, in inventing ſkillful works, and in other inſtances. The mind's ſelf-determining power, or freedom of choice. Her power of electing an end, and chuſing means to attain that end. Of controling our appetites, rejecting pleaſures, and chuſing pain, want, and death itſelf, in hopes of happineſs in a diſtant unknown ſtate of life. The Concluſion, being a ſhort recapitulation of the whole; with a Hymn to the Creator of the World.

WHILE

WHILE roſy Youth its perfect bloom maintains,
Thoughtleſs of age, and ignorant of pains;
While from the heart rich ſtreams with vigour ſpring,
Bound through their roads, and dance their vital ring;
And ſpirits, ſwift as ſun-beams through the ſkies,
Dart through thy nerves, and ſparkle in thy eyes;
While Nature with full ſtrength thy ſinews arms,
Glows in thy cheeks, and triumphs in her charms;
Indulge thy inſtincts, and intent on eaſe
With raviſhing delight thy ſenſes pleaſe.
Since no black clouds diſhonour now the ſky,
No winds, but balmy genial zephyrs, fly,
Eager embark, and to th' inviting gale
Thy pendants looſe, and ſpread thy ſilken ſail;
Sportive advance on pleaſure's wanton tide
Through flowery ſcenes, diffus'd on either ſide.
See how the hours their painted wings diſplay,
And draw, like harneſs'd doves, the ſmiling day!
Shall this glad ſpring, when active ferments climb,
Theſe months, the faireſt progeny of time,
The brighteſt parts in all duration's train,
Aſk thee to ſeize thy bliſs, and aſk in vain?
To their prevailing ſmiles thy heart reſign,
And wiſely make the proffer'd bleſſings thine.
Near ſome fair river, on reclining land,
Midſt groves and fountains let thy palace ſtand;
Let Parian walls unrival'd pomp diſplay,
And gilded towers repel augmented day;

Let

Let porphyry pillars in high rows uphold
The azure roof enrich'd with veins of gold;
And the fair creatures of the ſculptor's art
Part grace thy palace, and thy garden part;
Here let the ſcentful ſpoils of opening flowers
Breathe from thy citron walks, and jaſmine bowers;
Heſperian bloſſoms in thy boſom ſmell;
Let all Arabia in thy garments dwell.
That coſtly banquets and delicious feaſts
May crown thy table, to regale thy gueſts,
Ranſack the hills, and every park and wood,
The lake unpeople, and deſpoil the flood;
Procure each feather'd luxury, that beats
Its native air, or from its clime retreats,
And by alternate tranſmigration flies
O'er interpoſing ſeas, and changes ſkies;
Let artful cooks to raiſe their reliſh ſtrive,
With all the ſpicy taſtes the Indies give.
While wreaths of roſes round thy temples twine,
Enjoy the ſparkling bleſſings of the vine;
Let the warm nectar all thy veins inſpire,
Solace thy heart, and raiſe the vital fire.
Next let the charms of heavenly muſic cheer
Thy ſoul with rapture liſtening in thy ear;
Let tuneful chiefs exert their ſkill, to ſhow
What artful joys from manag'd ſound can flow;
Now hear the melting voice and trembling ſtring;
Let Pepuch touch the lyre, and Margarita ſing.
While wanton ferments ſwell thy glowing veins,
To the warm paſſion give the ſlacken'd reins;

Thy

Thy gazing eyes with blooming beauty feaſt,
Receive its dart, and hug it in thy breaſt;
From fair to fair with gay inconſtance rove,
Taſte every ſweet, and cloy thy ſoul with love.
But midſt thy boundleſs joys, unbridled youth,
Remember ſtill this ſad, but certain truth,
That thou at laſt ſeverely muſt account;
To what will thy congeſted guilt amount!
Allow a God; he muſt our deeds regard;
A righteous Judge muſt puniſh and reward:
Yet that he rears no high tribunal here,
Impartial juſtice to diſpenſe, is clear.
His ſword unpuniſh'd criminals defy,
Nor by his thunder does the tyrant die;
While Heaven's adorers, preſt with want and pain,
Their unrewarded innocence maintain.
See his right hand he unextended keeps,
Though long provok'd, th' unactive vengeance ſleeps.
Hence we a world ſucceeding this infer,
Where he his juſtice will aſſert; prepare
To ſtand arraign'd before his awful bar.
Where wilt thou hide thy ignominious head?
Shuddering with horror, what haſt thou to plead?
Deſpairing wretch! he 'll frown thee from his throne,
And by his wrath will make his being known.
Yet more Religion's empire to ſupport,
To puſh the foe, and make our laſt effort;
Let beings with attention be review'd,
Which, not alone with vital power endued,
Can move themſelves, can organiz'd perceive
The various ſtrokes, which various objects give.

By

By laws mechanic can Lucretius tell
How living creatures ſee, or hear, or ſmell?
How is the image to the ſenſe convey'd?
On the tun'd organ how the impulſe made?
How, and by which more noble part, the brain
Perceives th' idea, can their ſchools explain?
'Tis clear, in that ſuperior ſeat alone
The judge of objects has her ſecret throne;
Since, a limb ſever'd by the wounding ſteel,
We ſtill may pain, as in that member, feel.
Mark how the ſpirits watchful in the ear
Seize undulating ſounds, and catch the vocal air.
Obſerve how others, that the tongue poſſeſs,
Which ſalts of various ſhape and ſize impreſs,
From their affected fibres upward dart,
And different taſtes by different ſtrokes impart.
Remark, how thoſe, which in the noſtril dwell,
That artful organ deſtin'd for the ſmell,
By vapours mov'd, their paſſage upward take,
And ſcents unpleaſant or delightful make.
If in the tongue, the noſtril, and the ear,
No ſkill, no wiſdom, no deſign, appear;
Lucretians, next, regard the curious eye;
Can you no art, no prudence, there deſcry?
By your mechanic principles, in vain
The ſenſe of ſight you labour to explain.
You ſay, from all the objects of the eye
Thin colour'd ſhapes uninterrupted fly.
As wandering ghoſts (ſo ancient poets feign)
Skim through the air, and ſweep th' infernal plain;

So

So theſe light figures roam by day and night,
But undiſcover'd till betray'd by light.
  But can corporeal forms with ſo much eaſe
Meet in their flight a thouſand images,
And yet no conflict, no colliſive force,
Break their thin texture, and diſturb their courſe?
What fix'd their parts, and made them ſo cohere,
That they the picture of the object wear?
What is the ſhape, that from a body flies?
What moves, what propagates, what multiplies,
And paints one image in a thouſand eyes?
When to the eye the crowding figures paſs,
How in a point can all poſſeſs a place,
And lie diſtinguiſh'd in ſuch narrow ſpace?
Since all perception in the brain is made,
(Though where and how was never yet diſplay'd)
And ſince ſo great a diſtance lies between
The eye-ball, and the ſeat of ſenſe within;
While in the eye th' arreſted object ſtays,
Tell, what th' idea to the brain conveys?
  You ſay, the ſpirits in the optick nerve,
Mov'd by the intercepted image, ſerve
To bear th' impreſſion to the brain, and give
The ſtroke, by which the object we perceive.
  How does the brain, touch'd with a different ſtroke,
The whale diſtinguiſh from the marble rock?
Pronounce this tree a cedar, that an oak?
Can ſpirits weak or ſtronger blows expreſs,
One body greater, and another leſs?

How

How do they make us ſpace and diſtance know?
At once diſtinct a thouſand objects ſhow?
Lucretians, now proceed; contemplate all
The nobler actions of the animal,
Which inſtinct ſome, ſome lower reaſon, call.
Say, what contexture did by chance arrive,
Which to brute creatures did that inſtinct give
Whence they at ſight diſcern and dread their foe,
Their food diſtinguiſh, and their phyſic know?
By which the lion learns to hunt his prey,
And the weak herd to fear and fly away?
The birds contrive inimitable neſts?
And dens are haunted by the foreſt beaſts?
Whence ſome in ſubterranean dwellings hide,
Theſe in the rocks, and thoſe in woods abide?
Whence timorous beaſts, through hills and lawns purſued,
By artful ſhifts the ravening foe elude?
What various wonders may obſervers ſee
In a ſmall inſect, the ſagacious bee!
Mark, how the little untaught builders ſquare
Their rooms, and in the dark their lodgings rear!
Nature's mechanics, they unwearied ſtrive,
And fill with curious labyrinths the hive.
See, what bright ſtrokes of architecture ſhine
Through the whole frame, what beauty, what deſign!
Each odoriferous cell, and waxen tower,
The yellow pillage of the rifled flower,
Has twice three ſides, the only figure fit
To which the labourers may their ſtores commit
Without the loſs of matter, or of room,
In all the wondrous ſtructure of the comb.

Next

Next view, ſpectator, with admiring eyes,
In what juſt order all th' apartments riſe!
So regular their equal ſides cohere,
Th' adapted angles ſo each other bear,
That, by mechanic rules refin'd and bold,
They are at once upheld, at once uphold.
Does not this ſkill ev'n vie with reaſon's reach?
Can Euclid more, can more Palladio, teach?
Each verdant hill th' induſtrious chemiſts climb,
Extract the riches of the blooming thyme,
And, provident of winter long before,
They ſtock their caves, and hoard their flowery ſtore;
In peace they rule their ſtate with prudent care,
Wiſely defend, or wage offenſive war.
Maro, theſe wonders offer'd to his thought,
Felt his known ardour, and the rapture caught:
Then rais'd his voice, and in immortal lays
Did high as Heaven the inſect nation raiſe.
  If, Epicurus, this whole artful frame
Does not a wiſe Creator's hand proclaim,
To view the intellectual world advance;
Is this the creature too of Fate or Chance?
Turn on itſelf thy godlike reaſon's ray,
Thy mind contemplate, and its power ſurvey.
  What high perfections grace the human mind,
In fleſh impriſon'd, and to earth confin'd!
What vigour has ſhe! what a piercing ſight!
Strong as the winds, and ſprightly as the light!
She moves unweary'd, as the active fire,
And, like the flame, her flights to Heaven aſpire;

By

By day her thoughts in never-ceaſing ſtreams
Flow clear; by night they ſtrive in troubled dreams.
She draws ten thouſand landſcapes in the brain,
Dreſſes of airy forms an endleſs train,
Which all her intellectual ſcenes prepare,
Enter by turns the ſtage, and diſappear.
To the remoter regions of the ſky
Her ſwift-wing'd thought can in a moment fly;
Climb to the heights of Heaven, to be employ'd
In viewing thence th' interminable void;
Can look beyond the ſtream of time, to ſee
The ſtagnant ocean of eternity.
Thoughts in an inſtant through the zodiack run,
A year's long journey for the labouring ſun;
Then down they ſhoot, as ſwift as darting light,
Nor can oppoſing clouds retard their flight;
Through ſubterranean vaults with eaſe they ſweep,
And ſearch the hidden wonders of the deep.
When man with reaſon dignify'd is born,
No images his naked mind adorn;
No ſciences or arts enrich his brain,
Nor Fancy yet diſplays her pictur'd train:
He no innate ideas can diſcern,
Of knowledge deſtitute, though apt to learn.
Our intellectual, like the body's, eye,
Whilſt in the womb, no object can deſcry;
Yet is diſpos'd to entertain the light,
And judge of things when offer'd to the ſight.
When objects through the ſenſes paſſage gain,
And fill with various imagery the brain,

Th' ideas, which the mind does thence perceive,
To think and know the firſt occaſion give.
Did ſhe not uſe the ſenſes' miniſtry,
Nor ever taſte, or ſmell, or hear, or ſee,
Could ſhe poſſeſt of power perceptive be?
Wretches, who ſightleſs into being came,
Of light or colour no idea frame.
Then grant a man his being did commence,
Deny'd by Nature each external ſenſe,
Theſe ports unopen'd, diffident we gueſs,
Th' unconſcious ſoul no image could poſſeſs;
Though what in ſuch a ſtate the reſtleſs train
Of ſpirits would produce, we aſk in vain.
The mind proceeds, and to reflection goes,
Perceives ſhe does perceive, and knows ſhe knows;
Reviews her acts, and does from thence conclude
She is with reaſon and with choice endued.
From individuals of diſtinguiſh'd kind,
By her abſtracting faculty, the mind
Preciſely general natures can conceive,
And birth to notions univerſal give;
The various modes of things diſtinctly ſhows,
A pure reſpect, a nice relation knows,
And ſees whence each reſpect and each relation flows;
By her abſtracting power in pieces takes
The mix'd and compound whole, which Nature makes;
On objects of the ſenſes ſhe refines,
Beings by Nature ſeparated joins,
And ſevers qualities, which that combines.

The

The mind, from things repugnant, ſome reſpects
In which their natures are alike ſelects,
And can ſome difference and unlikeneſs ſee
In things which ſeem entirely to agree:
She does diſtinguiſh here, and there unite;
The mark of judgement that, and this of wit.
As ſhe can reckon, ſeparate, and compare,
Conceive what order, rule, proportion, are,
So from one thought ſhe ſtill can more infer;
Maxim from maxim can by force expreſs,
And make diſcover'd truths aſſociate truths confeſs:
On plain foundations, which our reaſon lays,
She can ſtupendous frames of ſcience raiſe;
Notion on notion built will towering riſe,
Till th' intellectual fabrics reach the ſkies;
The mathematic axioms, which appear
By ſcientific demonſtration clear,
The maſter builders on two pillars rear:
From two plain problems by laborious thought
Is all the wondrous ſuperſtructure wrought.
The ſoul, as mention'd, can herſelf inſpect,
By acts reflex can view her acts direct;
A taſk too hard for ſenſe; for though the eye
Its own reflected image can deſcry,
Yet it ne'er ſaw the ſight by which it ſees,
Viſion can ſhew no colour'd images.
The mind's tribunal can reports reject
Made by the ſenſes, and their faults correct;
The magnitude of diſtant ſtars it knows,
Which erring ſenſe, as twinkling tapers, ſhows;

Crooked the ſhape our cheated eye believes,
Which through a double medium it receives;
Superior mind does a right judgement make,
Declares it ſtraight, and mends the eye's miſtake.
Where dwells this ſovereign arbitrary ſoul,
Which does the human animal control,
Inform each part, and agitate the whole?
O'er miniſterial ſenſes does preſide,
To all their various provinces divide,
Each member move, and every motion guide,
Which, by her ſecret unconteſted nod,
Her meſſengers the ſpirits ſends abroad,
Through every nervous paſs, and every vital road,
To fetch from every diſtant part a train
Of outward objects, to enrich the brain?
Where ſits this bright intelligence enthron'd,
With numberleſs ideas pour'd around?
Where ſciences and arts in order wait,
And truths divine compoſe her god-like ſtate?
Can the diſſecting ſteel the brain diſplay,
And the auguſt apartment open lay,
Where this great queen ſtill chuſes to reſide
In intellectual pomp, and bright ideal pride?
Or can the eye, aſſiſted by the glaſs,
Diſcern the ſtrait, but hoſpitable place,
In which ten thouſand images remain,
Without confuſion, and their rank maintain?
How does this wondrous principle of thought
Perceive the object by the ſenſes brought?
What philoſophic builder will eſſay
By rules mechanic to unfold the way

How a machine muſt be diſpos'd to think,
Ideas how to frame, and how to link?
Tell us, Lucretius, Epicurus, tell,
And you in wit unrival ſhall excel,
How through the outward ſenſe the object flies,
How in the ſoul her images ariſe;
What thinking, what perception is, explain;
What all the airy creatures of the brain;
How to the mind a thought reflected goes,
And how the conſcious engine knows it knows.
The mind a thouſand ſkilful works can frame,
Can form deep projects to procure her aim.
Merchants for eaſtern pearl and golden ore
To croſs the main, and reach the Indian ſhore,
Prepare the floating ſhip, and ſpread the ſail,
To catch the impulſe of the breathing gale.
Warriors in framing ſchemes their wiſdom ſhow,
To diſappoint or circumvent the foe.
Th' ambitious ſtateſman labours dark deſigns,
Now open force employs, now undermines;
By paths direct his end he now purſues,
By ſide approaches now, and ſlanting views.
See, how reſiſtleſs orators perſuade,
Draw out their forces, and the heart invade;
Touch every ſpring and movement of the ſoul,
This appetite excite, and that control;
Their powerful voice can flying troops arreſt,
Confirm the weak, and melt th' obdurate breaſt;
Chace from the ſad their melancholy air,
Sooth diſcontent, and ſolace anxious care.

When threatening tides of rage and anger riſe,
Uſurp the throne, and reaſon's ſway deſpiſe,
When in the ſeats of life this tempeſt reigns,
Beats through the heart, and drives along the veins;
See, eloquence with force perſuaſive binds
The reſtleſs waves, and charms the warring winds,
Reſiſtleſs bids tumultuous uproar ceaſe,
Recalls the calm, and gives the boſom peace.
Did not the mind, on heavenly joy intent,
The various kinds of harmony invent?
She the theorbo, ſhe the viol found,
And all the moving melody of ſound?
She gave to breathing tubes a power unknown,
To ſpeak inſpir'd with accents not their own;
Taught tuneful ſons of muſic how to ſing,
How, by vibrations of th' extended ſtring,
And manag'd impulſe on the ſuffering air,
T' extort the rapture, and delight the ear.
See, how celeſtial reaſon does command
The ready pencil in the painter's hand;
Whoſe ſtrokes affect with nature's ſelf to vie,
And with falſe life amuſe the doubtful eye:
Behold the ſtrong emotions of the mind
Exerted in the eyes, and in the face deſign'd.
Such is the artiſt's wondrous power, that we
Ev'n pictur'd ſouls and colour'd paſſions ſee,
Where without words (peculiar eloquence)
The buſy figures ſpeak their various ſenſe.
What living face does more diſtreſs or woe,
More finiſh'd ſhame, confuſion, horror, know,
Than what the maſters of the pencil ſhew?

Mean

Mean time the chizel with the pencil vies;
The ſiſter arts diſpute the doubtful prize.
Are human limbs, ev'n in their vital ſtate,
More juſt and ſtrong, more free and delicate,
Than Buonorota's curious tools create?
He to the rock can vital inſtincts give,
Which thus transform'd can rage, rejoice, or grieve:
His ſkilful hand does marble veins inſpire
Now with the lover's, now the hero's fire;
So well th' imagin'd actors play their part,
The ſilent hypocrites ſuch power exert,
That paſſions, which they feel not, they beſtow,
Affright us with their fear, and melt us with their woe.
There Niobe leans weeping on her arm:
How her ſad looks and beauteous ſorrow charm!
See, here a Venus ſoft in Parian ſtone;
A Pallas there to ancient fables known;
That from the rock aroſe, not from the main,
This not from Jove's, but from the ſculptor's brain.
Admire the carver's fertile energy,
With raviſh'd eyes his happy offſpring ſee.
What beauteous figures by th' unrival'd art
Of Britiſh Gibbons from the cedar ſtart!
He makes that tree unnative charms aſſume,
Uſurp gay honours, and another's bloom;
The various fruits, which different climates bear,
And all the pride the fields and gardens wear;
While from unjuicy limbs without a root
New buds deviſ'd, and leafy branches, ſhoot.
As human kind can by an act direct,
Perceive and know, then reaſon and reflect:

So the Self-moving Spring has power to chuſe,
Theſe methods to reject, and thoſe to uſe;
She can deſign and proſecute an end,
Exert her vigour, or her act ſuſpend;
Free from the inſults of all foreign power,
She does her godlike liberty ſecure;
Her right and high prerogative maintains,
Impatient of the yoke, and ſcorns coercive chains;
She can her airy train of forms diſband,
And makes new levees at her own command;
O'er her ideas ſovereign ſhe preſides,
At pleaſure theſe unites, and thoſe divides.
The ready phantoms at her nod advance,
And form the buſy intellectual dance;
While her fair ſcenes to vary, or ſupply,
She ſingles out fit images, that lie
In memory's records, which faithful hold
Objects immenſe in ſecret marks inroll'd;
The ſleeping forms at her command awake,
And now return, and now their cells forſake,
On active Fancy's crowded theatre,
As ſhe directs, they riſe or diſappear.
Objects, which through the ſenſes make their way,
And juſt impreſſions to the ſoul convey,
Give her occaſion firſt herſelf to move,
And to exert her hatred, or her love;
Ideas, which to ſome impulſive ſeem,
Act not upon the mind, but that on them.
When ſhe to foreign objects audience gives,
Their ſtrokes and motions in the brain perceives,

As

As theſe perceptions, we ideas name,
From her own power and active nature came,
So when diſcern'd by intellectual light,
Herſelf her various paſſions does excite,
To ill her hate, to good her appetite;
To ſhun the firſt, the latter to procure,
She chuſes means by free elective power;
She can their various habitudes ſurvey,
Debate their fitneſs, and their merit weigh,
And, while the means ſuggeſted ſhe compares,
She to the rivals this or that prefers.
By her ſuperior power the reaſoning ſoul
Can each reluctant appetite control;
Can every paſſion rule, and every ſenſe,
Change Nature's courſe, and with her laws diſpenſe;
Our breathing to prevent, ſhe can arreſt
Th' extenſion, or contraction, of the breaſt;
When pain'd with hunger, we can food refuſe,
And wholeſome abſtinence, or famine chuſe.
Can the wild beaſt his inſtinct diſobey,
And from his jaws releaſe the captive prey?
Or hungry herds on verdant paſtures lie,
Mindleſs to eat, and reſolute to die?
With heat expiring, can the panting hart
Patient of thirſt from the cool ſtream depart?
Can brutes at will impriſon'd breath detain?
Torment prefer to eaſe, and life diſdain?
From all reſtraint, from all compulſion free,
Unforc'd, and unneceſſitated, we
Ourſelves determine, and our freedom prove,
When this we fly, and to that object move.

Had

Had not the mind a power to will and chuſe,
One object to embrace, and one refuſe;
Could ſhe not act, or not her act ſuſpend,
As it obſtructed, or advanc'd her end;
Virtue and Vice were names without a cauſe,
This would not Hate deſerve, nor that Applauſe;
Juſtice in vain has high tribunals rear'd,
Whom can her ſentence puniſh, whom reward?
If impious children ſhould their father kill,
Can they be wicked, when they cannot will;
When only cauſes foreign and unſeen
Strike with reſiſtleſs force the ſprings within,
Whence in the engine man all motion muſt begin?
Are vapours guilty, which the vintage blaſt?
Are ſtorms proſcrib'd, which lay the foreſt waſte?
Why lies the wretch then tortur'd on the wheel,
If forc'd to treaſon, or compell'd to ſteal?
Why does the warrior, by auſpicious fate
With laurels crown'd, and clad in robes of ſtate,
In triumph ride amidſt the gazing throng
Deaf with applauſes, and the Poet's ſong;
If the victorious, but the brute machine
Did only wreaths inevitable win,
And no wiſe choice or vigilance has ſhown,
Mov'd by a fatal impulſe, not his own?
Should trains of atoms human ſenſe impel,
Though not ſo fierce, ſo ſtrong, ſo viſible,
As ſoldiers arm'd, and do not men arreſt
With clubs upheld and daggers at their breaſt;
Yet means compulſive are not plainer ſhown,
When ruffians drive, or conquerors drag us on;

As much we 're forc'd, when by an atom 's sway
Control'd, as when a tyrant we obey;
And, by whatever cause constrain'd to act,
We merit no reward, no guilt contract.
Our mind of rulers feels a conscious awe,
Reveres their justice, and regards their law.
She rectitude and deviation knows,
That vice from one, from one that virtue flows;
Of these she feels unlike effects within,
From virtue pleasure, and remorse from sin;
Hopes of a just reward by that are fed,
By this of wrath vindictive secret dread.
The mind, which thus can rules of duty learn,
Can right from wrong, and good from ill, discern,
Which, the sharp stroke of justice to prevent,
Can shame express, can grieve, reflect, repent;
From fate or chance her rise can never draw,
Those causes know not virtue, vice, or law.
She can a life succeeding this conceive,
Of bliss or woe an endless state believe.
Dreading the just and universal doom,
And aw'd by fears of punishment to come,
By hopes excited of a glorious crown,
And certain pleasures in a world unknown;
She can the fond desires of sense restrain,
Renounce delight, and chuse distress and pain;
Can rush on danger, can destruction face,
Joyful relinquish life, and death embrace;
She to afflicted virtue can adhere,
And chains and want to prosperous guilt prefer;

Unmov'd,

Unmov'd, theſe wild tempeſtuous ſeats ſurvey,
And view ſerene this reſtleſs rolling ſea.
In vain the monſters, which the coaſt infeſt,
Spend all their rage to interrupt her reſt;
Her charming ſong the ſyren ſings in vain,
She can the tuneful hypocrite diſdain;
Fix'd and unchang'd the faithleſs world behold,
Deaf to its threats, and to its favour cold.
Sages remark, we labour not to ſhow
The will is free, but that the man is ſo:
For what enlighten'd reaſoner can declare
What human will and underſtanding are?
What ſcience from thoſe objects can we frame
Of which we little know, beſides the name?
The learned, who with anatomic art
Diſſect the mind, and thinking ſubſtance part,
And various powers and faculties aſſert,
Perhaps by ſuch abſtraction of the mind
Divide the things, that are in nature join'd.
What maſters of the ſchools can make it clear
Thoſe faculties, which two to them appear,
Are not reſiding in the ſoul the ſame,
And not diſtinct, but by a different name?
Thus has the Muſe purſued her hardy theme,
And ſung the wonders of this artful frame.
Ere yet one ſubterranean arch was made,
One cavern vaulted, or one girder laid;
Ere the high rocks did o'er the ſhores arife,
Or ſnowy mountains tower'd amidſt the ſkies;
Before the watery troops fil'd off from land,
And lay amidſt the rocks entrench'd in ſand;

Before

Before the air its boſom did unfold,
Or burniſh'd orbs in blue expanſion roll'd;
She ſung how Nature then in embryo lay,
And did the ſecrets of her birth diſplay.
When after, at th' Almighty's high command,
Obedient waves divided from the land;
And ſhades and lazy miſts were chac'd away,
While roſy light diffus'd the tender day;
When uproar ceas'd, and wild confuſion fled,
And new-born Nature rais'd her beauteous head;
She ſung the frame of this terreſtrial pile,
The hills, the rocks, the rivers, and the ſoil;
She view'd the ſandy frontiers, which reſtrain
The noiſy inſults of th' impriſon'd main;
Rang'd o'er the wide diffuſion of the waves,
The moiſt cœrulean walks, and ſearch'd the coral caves.
She then ſurvey'd the fluid fields of air,
And the crude ſeeds of meteors faſhion'd there;
Then with continued flight ſhe ſped her way,
Mounted, and bold purſued the ſource of day;
With wonder of celeſtial motions ſung,
How the pois'd orbs are in the vacant hung,
How the bright ſluices of ætherial light,
Now ſhut, defend the empire of the night,
And now, drawn up with wiſe alternate care,
Let floods of glory out, and ſpread with day the air.
Then with a daring wing ſhe ſoar'd ſublime,
From realm to realm, from orb to orb did climb:
Swift through the ſpacious gulph ſhe urg'd her way,
At length emerg'd in empyrean day;

Where

Where far, oh far, beyond what mortals ſee,
In the void diſtricts of immenſity,
The mind new ſuns, new planets, can explore,
And yet beyond can ſtill imagine more.
Thus in bold numbers did th' adventurous Muſe
To ſing the lifeleſs parts of Nature chuſe;
And then advanc'd to wonders yet behind,
Survey'd and ſung the vegetable kind;
Did lofty woods, and humble brakes review,
Along the valley ſwept, and o'er the mountain flew.
Then left the Muſe the field and waving grove,
And unfatigued with grateful labour ſtrove
To climb th' amazing heights of ſenſe, and ſing
The power perceptive, and the inward ſpring
Which agitates and guides each living thing.
She next eſſay'd the embryo's riſe to trace
From an unfaſhion'd, rude, unchannel'd maſs:
Sung how the ſpirits waken'd in the brain
Exert their force, and genial toil maintain;
Erect the beating heart, the channels frame,
Unfold entangled limbs, and kindle vital flame;
How the ſmall pipes are in meanders laid,
And bounding life is to and fro convey'd;
How ſpirits, which for ſenſe and motion ſerve,
Unguided find the perforated nerve,
Through every dark receſs purſue their flight,
Unconſcious of the road, and void of ſight,
Yet, certain of the way, ſtill guide their motions right.
From thence a nobler flight ſhe did eſſay,
The mind's extended empire to ſurvey.

She ſung the godlike principle of thought,
And how, from objects by the ſenſes brought,
The intellectual imagery is wrought;
How ſhe the modes of beings can diſcern,
A nice reſpect, a meer relation learn;
Can all the thin abſtracted notions reach,
Which Grecian wits, or, Britain, thine can teach.
Thus has the Muſe ſtrove to diſplay a part
Of thoſe unnumber'd miracles of art,
Of prudence, conduct, and of wiſe deſign,
Which to th' attentive thought conſpicuous ſhine.
Still, vanquiſh'd Atheiſts! will you keep the field,
And, hard in error, ſtill refuſe to yield?
See, all your broken arms lie ſpread around,
And ignominious rout deforms the ground;
Be wiſe, and once, admoniſh'd by a foe,
Where lies your ſtrength, and where your weakneſs, know;
No more at Reaſon's ſolemn bar appear,
Hardy no more ſcholaſtic weapons bear;
Diſband your feeble forces, and decline
The war; no more in tinſel armour ſhine;
Nor ſhake your bullruſh ſpears, but ſwift repair
To your ſtrong place of arms, the ſcoffer's chair;
And thence, ſupported with a mocking ring,
Sarcaſtic darts and keen invectives fling
Againſt your foes, and ſcornful at your feaſts
Religion vanquiſh with deciſive jeſts;
Arm'd with reſiſtleſs laughter, Heaven aſſail,
Relinquiſh Reaſon, and let Mirth prevail.
Good Heaven! that men, who vaunt diſcerning ſight,
And arrogant from wiſdom's diſtant height

Look

Look down on vulgar mortals, who revere
A Cauſe Supreme, ſhould their proud building rear
Without one prop the ponderous pile to bear!
How much the Judge, who does in Heaven preſide
Re-mocks the ſcoffer, and contemns his pride!
Behold, the ſad unſufferable hour
Advances near, which will his error cure;
When he compell'd ſhall drink the wrathful bowl,
And ruin'd feel immortal vengeance roll
Through all his veins, and drench his inmoſt ſoul.
O'erwhelm'd with horror, ſunk in deep deſpair,
And loſt for ever, will the wretch forbear
To curſe his madneſs, and blaſpheme the power
Of his juſt Sovereign, which he mock'd before?
  Hail, King Supreme! of Power Immenſe Abyſs!
Father of Light! Exhauſtleſs Source of Bliſs!
Thou uncreated, Self-exiſtent Cauſe,
Control'd by no ſuperior Being's laws,
Ere infant light eſſay'd to dart the ray,
Smil'd heavenly ſweet, and try'd to kindle day:
Ere the wide fields of æther were diſplay'd,
Or ſilver ſtars cœrulean ſpheres inlaid;
Ere yet the eldeſt child of Time was born,
Or verdant pride young Nature did adorn;
Thou art; and didſt eternity employ
In unmoleſted peace, in plenitude of joy,
  In its ideal frame the world, deſign'd
From ages paſt, lay finiſh'd in thy mind.
Conform to this divine imagin'd plan,
With perfect art th' amazing work began.

Thy

Thy glance ſurvey'd the ſolitary plains,
Where ſhapeleſs ſhade inert and ſilent reigns;
Then in the dark and undiſtinguiſh'd ſpace,
Unfruitful, uninclos'd, and wild of face,
Thy compaſs for the world mark'd out the deſtin'd place.
Then didſt Thou through the fields of barren Night
Go forth, collected in Creating Might.
Where Thou almighty vigour didſt exert,
Which emicant did this and that way dart
Through the black boſom of the empty ſpace:
The gulphs confeſs th' omnipotent embrace,
And, pregnant grown with elemental ſeed,
Unfiniſh'd orbs and worlds in embryo breed.
From the crude maſs, Omniſcient Architect,
Thou for each part materials didſt ſelect,
And with a maſter-hand thy world erect.
Labour'd by Thee, the globes, vaſt lucid buoys,
By Thee uplifted, float in liquid ſkies:
By Thy cementing word their parts cohere,
And roll by Thy impulſive nod in air.
Thou in the vacant didſt the earth ſuſpend,
Advance the mountains, and the vales extend;
People the plains with flocks, with beaſts the wood,
And ſtore with ſcaly colonies the flood.
Next, Man aroſe at Thy Creating Word,
Of Thy terreſtial realms vicegerent lord.
His ſoul, more artful labour, more refin'd,
And emulous of bright Seraphic Mind,

Ennobled by Thy Image, ſpotleſs ſhone,
Prais'd Thee her author, and ador'd Thy throne:
Able to know, admire, enjoy her God,
She did her high felicity applaud.
Since Thou didſt all the ſpacious worlds diſplay,
Homage to Thee let all obedient pay.
Let glittering ſtars, that dance their deſtin'd ring
Sublime in ſky, with vocal planets ſing
Confederate praiſe to Thee, O Great Creator King!
Let the thin diſtricts of the waving air,
Conveyancers of ſound, Thy ſkill declare.
Let winds, the breathing creatures of the ſkies,
Call in each vigorous gale, that roving flies
By land or ſea; then one loud triumph raiſe,
And all their blaſts employ in ſongs of praiſe.
While painted herald-birds Thy deeds proclaim,
And on their ſpreading wings convey Thy fame:
Let Eagles, which in Heaven's blue concave ſoar,
Scornful of earth ſuperior ſeats explore,
And riſe with breaſts erect againſt the ſun,
Be miniſters to bear Thy bright renown,
And carry ardent praiſes to Thy throne.
Ye fiſh, aſſume a voice; with praiſes fill
The hollow rock, and loud reactive hill.
Let lions with their roar their thanks expreſs,
With acclamations ſhake the wilderneſs.
Let thunder-clouds, that float from pole to pole,
With ſalvos loud ſalute Thee as they roll.
Ye monſters of the ſea, ye noiſy waves,
Strike with applauſe the repercuſſive caves.

Let

Let hail and rain, let meteors form'd of fire,
And lambent flames, in this bleſt work conſpire.
Let the high cedar and the mountain pine
Lowly to thee, Great King, their heads incline,
Let every ſpicy odoriferous tree
Preſent its incenſe and its balm to Thee.
And thou, Heaven's viceroy o'er this world below,
In this bleſt taſk ſuperior ardour ſhow:
To view thyſelf, inflect thy reaſon's ray,
Nature's repleniſh'd theatre ſurvey;
Then all on fire the Author's ſkill adore,
And in loud ſongs extol Creating Power.
Degenerate minds, in mazy error loſt,
May combat Heaven, and impious triumphs boaſt;
But, while my veins feel animating fires,
And vital air this breathing breaſt inſpires,
Grateful to Heaven, I'll ſtretch a pious wing,
And ſing His praiſe, who gave me power to ſing. 773.

C O N T E N T

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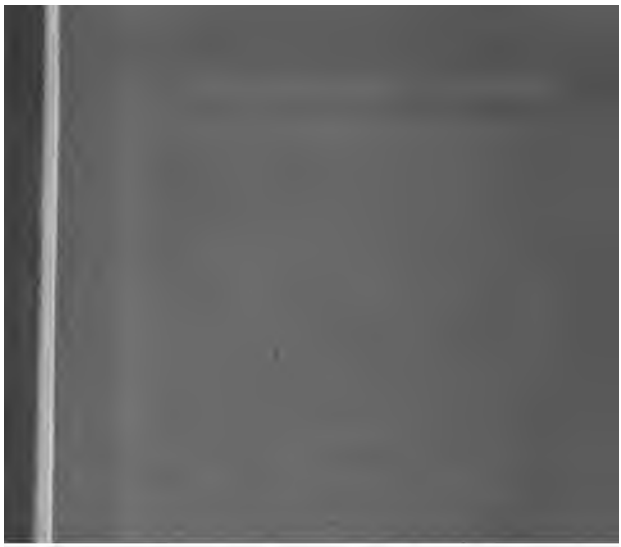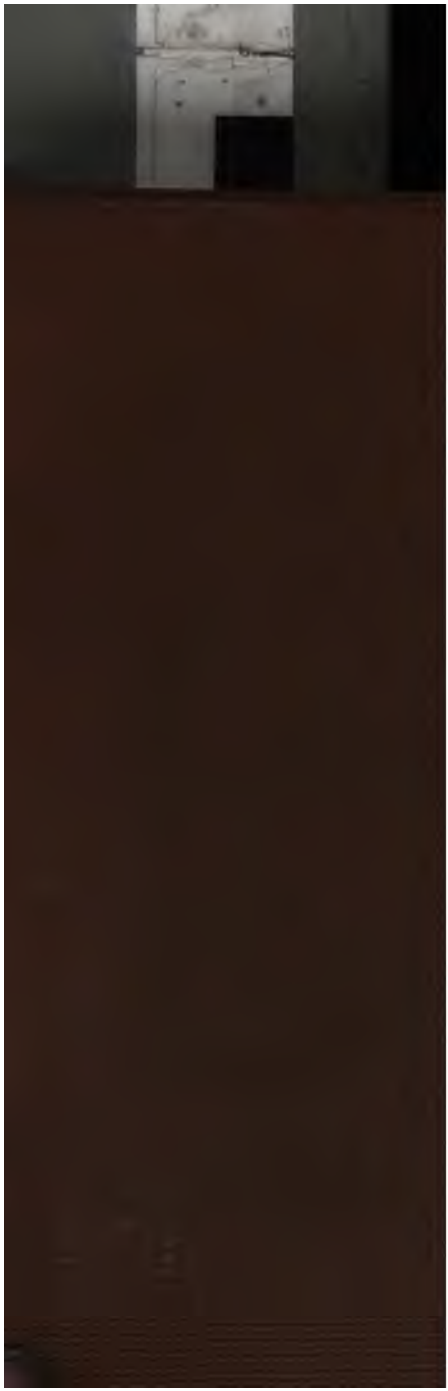
END OF BLACKMORE'S CREATION.